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Report of Phase I of the  
PROJECT IN FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION  
FOR RURAL YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES

Volume I: Fieldwork and Community  
Profile

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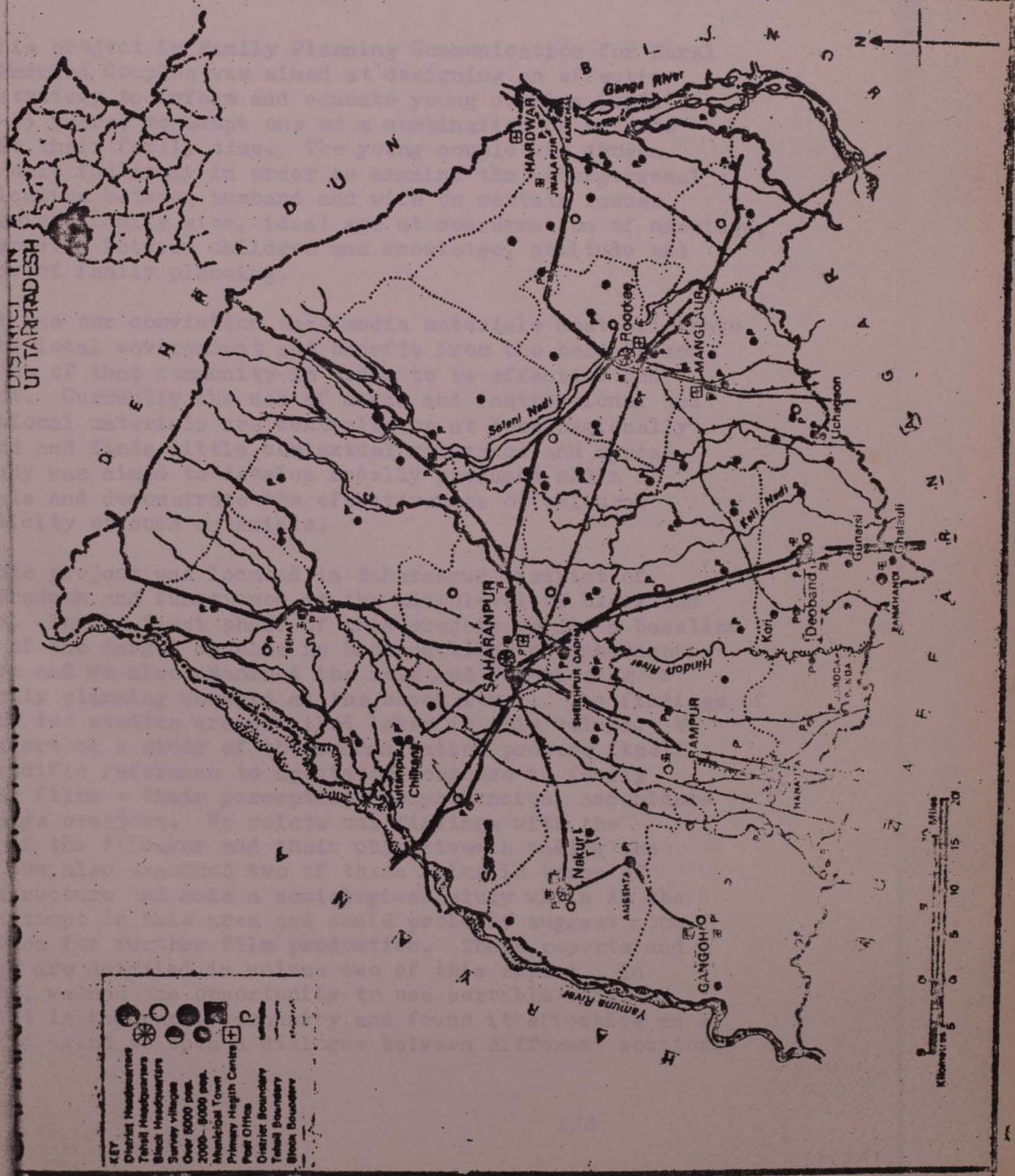
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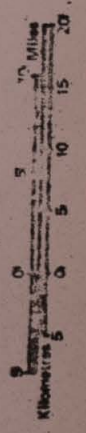


DISTRICT IN  
UT PRADESH



**KEY**

	District Headquarters
	Tehsil Headquarters
	Block Headquarters
	Survey villages
	Over 5000 pop. 2000-5000 pop.
	Municipal Town
	Primary Health Centre
	Post Office
	District Boundary
	Tehsil Boundary
	Block Boundary



## I INTRODUCTION

1 This project in Family Planning Communication for Rural Young Married Couples was aimed at designing an effective media strategy to inform and educate young couples (wife's age 15-25 years) to adopt one or a combination of methods to limit their family size. The young couple was chosen as our unit for study in order to examine the interpersonal communication between husband and wife on certain issues like desired family size, ideal age at consummation of marriage, ideal spacing between children and knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning.

2 It was our conviction that media materials must originate from the local environment and benefit from the beliefs and practices of that community in order to be effective and relevant. Currently the use of media and instructional and motivational materials are centrally or at best regionally produced and finds little contextual relevance and appeal. Our study was aimed to develop locally produced media materials and demonstrate the effectiveness of cultural authenticity of such materials.

3 This project was located in Saharanpur District of Uttar Pradesh and functioned at the microlevel of block and village. In the first phase of this project we did a baseline survey of the target couples in Deoband block of Saharanpur district and we also examined the role and functioning of the family planning workers at the block level. The findings of of these two studies are detailed later in this volume. We also undertook a study of the communication process itself with specific reference to spectator response to family planning films - their perception, comprehension, acceptance of message etcetera. We relate our findings with the intent of the filmmaker and their objectives in making the films. We also examined two of these films in terms of their structure and made a semiological study which is the first attempt in this area and could probably suggest some guidelines for further film production. These reports and findings are detailed in volume two of this report. In addition, we had the opportunity to use portable video equipment in the rural community and found it effective as a catalytic agent to open a dialogue between different sections

of the village on matters of land redistribution, corruption of government officials or family planning.

4 Having completed the first phase of this project we are perhaps in a position to reassert our conviction that the local community must be involved in the production of media materials. By and large, our film study revealed that motivational films are not immediate and they are too remote to matter. The film show has no context in the community. For instance, it does not relate to any festival or religious occasion, nor is it supported by services and facilities that are talked of in the films. Commercial films have created expectations of 'song and dance' in films and hence the attitude to film viewing is casual and geared mainly for entertainment. On the other hand, we also found that there was a felt need for specific information or instruction. The film potential could be exploited further to deliver a message provided the film is simple, emotionally absorbing with well defined characters who have some connection with the specific rural environments. The filmmakers should bother a little more about specific audience groups and clarity of purpose.

5 Our study of the family planning organisation at the block level leads us to believe that the workers at the block and village level have lost their faith in the target oriented family planning programme. They are not given proper leadership by the medical officers who do not regard family planning as an important aspect of their work. The workers find themselves isolated in the community that they are working in and feel that they have little to offer to the community. Most of the workers had inadequate knowledge of the specific birth control methods and with little or no audiovisual aids to help them their educational work to popularise family planning is almost negligible.

6 The baseline survey of young couples (wife's age 15-25 years) showed that a strong social disapproval was present in regard to sterilisation and most of our respondents were unwilling to use any of the contraceptive methods to limit their family size. However, the resistance is greater with regard to sterilisation than with regard to Nirodh or the loop. Strangely enough, our survey also brought out that a majority of our respondents had never been approached by a government doctor in connection with family planning or otherwise. Similarly more than three quarters of them had

never been contacted by the family planning field workers. This clearly showed the appallingly low level of communication between the community and the personnel.

7 In the course of the baseline survey we often found that the structured questionnaire that we were using had several limitations. We encountered organised resistance to our interviewers when they entered some villages and sought to interview young wives. Most often these interviews could not be conducted privately and frequently the answers were provided by the mother-in-law or other elders in the household. We were unable to interview many Muslim couples. Husbands and wives reported differently regarding the number of children they had. Again, we found that credibility of mass media was inversely related to the degree of exposure to it. Exposure to film was minimal but credibility of film was highest. The records maintained by the village level worker or at the PHC were inaccurate. Persons supposed to be family planning acceptors were often nonexistent in the village.

8 This confirmed our reservations regarding the usefulness of formal research methodology and quantitative data analysis. We relied on our own intuition and field experience to guide us in this project and our encounter with the family planning organisation and programme at the grass roots shows that credibility of this programme is low. In order to be effective family planning communication cannot be separated from clinical services and general socioeconomic development of a community. There is a great need for specific instruction and information diffusion through film and other media. The passivity of a film viewing situation makes it important that we search for an alternate medium that has an immediacy to the local community and in which they can also participate and feel involved. Our experience with community video points in that direction.

9 In the next phase of this project we hope to take this integrated approach to the problem. Our main thrust will be for community video which will be an aid to nonformal education and preventive and clinical medical services. We shall support this programme with rural development projects through cottage industries, low cost technologies and alternate sources of energy.

## II - BASELINE DATA

This chapter is derived from the two baseline studies undertaken by Drs Bhivarao Patil and Surjit Kaur of the Council for Social Development. The first part is based on the audience survey data collected from 199 young couples where the wives' age was between 15-25 years, from four villages of Deoband block of Saharanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. For this audience survey all target couples available and willing at the time of interview were included in the sample. Young couples were selected mainly because the fertility rate is high in this age group.

The couple was studied as a unit, for decisions regarding family planning are usually taken jointly, seldom by husband or wife alone.

The selection of villages was guided by five major considerations:

- (i) geographical location,
- (ii) distance from the family planning centre, in particular, and the pucca road in general,
- (iii) size of population,
- (iv) diffusion rate of family planning methods,
- (v) social and religious compositions or complexity. The location of these villages can be seen from Table I and the accompanying map.

TABLE I: CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY VILLAGES

Characteristics	Survey Locations			
	Uchagaon	Ghaloli	Kuri	Gumarsi
Geographical location	West	South	East	Centre
Distance from Primary Health Centre	13 Kms	11 Kms	7 Kms	4 Kms
Total Population	917	1607	2640	1528
Total Scheduled Castes	379	760	1190	720
Target couples (wives age between 15-25 years)	44	76	100	80
Protected Couples	9	5	45	9

The readiness of respondents is an important factor in the interview situation. The unwilling and hesitant respondents contribute little to the understanding of the human behaviour under investigation. Thus, only the willing were included in the survey. Even then the replies were often highly subjective and did not always correspond to objective reality, for example, husbands and their wives reported different number of children born to them.

TABLE II: MEAN SCORES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES ON SEVEN POINT SCALES

Rating	Mean Scores of	
	Husbands	Wives
Cooperation	7	5
Comprehension	6	4
Presence of others	3	3
Interference by others	0.5	2.

On an average three people were found to be present at the time of the interview, but the onlookers present interfered more at the interviews of the wives. The interview situation was thus somewhat inhibited, and it was difficult to get the more subtle and meaningful responses to open ended questions. For this survey a combination of open ended and pre coded questions were used in a structured interview schedule. The interview schedule included 35 major questions and lasted on an average for 20 minutes. It was pretested and revised substantially before it was finally administered to 199 couples. The questionnaire is reproduced at the end of this chapter.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information about

- (i) family background in terms of age, caste, religion, marital status, education, occupation and income,
- (ii) perception of changing family status,
- (iii) perception of family welfare,
- (iv) material possession and expectations,

(v) ideals of family planning, such as best age for boy's and girl's marriage, spacing and family size,

(vi) inter spouse communication,

(vii) marital life,

(viii) knowledge of physiology of reproduction,

(ix) awareness, interest, willingness and adoption of family planning methods,

(x) communication behaviour and skills,

(xi) family planning communication through mass media and person to person contact,

(xii) perception of social sanction of birth control methods, and

(xiii) opinion and utilisation of family planning services.

The aim was to arrive at an understanding of basic attitudes and realities that determine the decision making process.

TABLE III: AGE GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

Age groups	Husbands	Wives
15 - 16	0	15
17 - 20	24	75
21 - 25	93	95
26 - 30	68	14
31 - 44	14	0
Mean ages	25	22

The 14 wives beyond the reproductive age group of 15 - 25 years were included in our sample because they were approached through their husbands who reported their age as being less than 25 years. In other words, the age of the wife as reported by her husband was used as a criterion for selecting the target couples in our sample.

TABLE IV: REPORTED AGE AT MARRIAGE

Age groups	Husbands	Wives
6 - 9	0	12
10 - 14	20	103
15 - 20	126	80
21 - 33	53	0
Mean age	18	14

The majority of women were married before the age of 15 and the majority of men were married after the age of 15.

TABLE V: YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE

Years	Husbands	Wives
1 - 5	70	57
6 - 10	91	93
11 - 15	31	40
16 - 19	5	5
Mean years	9	9

The husbands and wives differed in their reports of the same data, for example, the number of years they had been married. The mean years of married life for couples in the sample is about nine years and the range is 1 - 19 years.

TABLE VI: NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS BORN AND NUMBERS LIVING TO COUPLES

Number of children	Husbands				Wives			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Born	Living	Born	Living	Born	Living	Born	Living
0	77	86	84	94	77	71	77	88
1	56	59	65	63	55	59	62	63
2	42	39	32	28	34	43	33	29
3	17	11	17	12	19	9	18	13
4	6	4	1	1	9	5	2	4
5	1	-	0	-	1	-	1	-

The number of boys and girls living is reported differently by husbands and wives.

TABLE VII: COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

Community	Number of Couples
Brahmin	52
Gujar	2
Jat	8
Vaishya	6
Badai	8
Julaha	11
Dhivar	68
Scheduled castes	44
Muslims	10

TABLE VIII: OCCUPATION

Category	Male	Female
Housewives	-	182
Cultivators	95	6
Agri-labourers	61	8
Artisans	7	-
Blue collar workers	13	-
White collar workers	5	-
Unspecified	17	-
No occupation	1	-

TABLE IX: EDUCATION

	Husbands	Wives
No education	66	155
1 - 4 years	21	13
5 - 8 years	42	28
9 - 11 years	52	-
12 - 18 years	18	-

Mean years of education 6 and 2

Hindi is the common language and the medium of instruction and communication. More than 80 percent of the women and 36 percent of the men cannot read or write at all. Therefore, the written word has limited reach in this area.

#### COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The husbands and wives in the sample were asked to choose between the pairs of mass media as more credible for information about family planning and also between pairs of person to person contact as more legitimate for advice.

TABLE X: HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDICATING THEIR CHOICES FOR MASS MEDIA AS CREDIBLE AND PERSON TO PERSON CONTACT AS LEGITIMATE.

MEDIA	CHOICES MADE BY	
	HUSBANDS (in percent)	WIVES (in percent)
MASS MEDIA		
Newspaper	18	22
Film	44	46
Poster	22	02
Leaflet	16	29
PERSON TO PERSON CONTACT		
Family Members	47	64
Friends	26	08
Relatives	20	23
Leaders	07	05

Both husbands and wives have mentioned film as the most credible source of information for family planning when compared with other mass media.

Table X also shows that both husbands and wives mentioned family members as being the most legitimate source of advice

about family planning. The couples are strongly motivated to conform to family norms and this affects any decision regarding the adoption of family planning methods. It is in this sense that education for family planning includes the entire family.

TABLE XI: PERCENTAGES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES WHO NEVER HAD ANY EXPOSURE TO MASS MEDIA AND FAMILY PLANNING MESSAGES.

MEDIA	NOT HAVING EXPOSURE	
	Husband (in percent)	Wives (in percent)
Towns or cities	4	55
To Radio	28	46
Commercial Film	56	77
Newspaper	63	88
FAMILY PLANNING MESSAGES VIA		
Posters	19	72
Films	69	90
Radio	35	72
Newspaper	72	98
Booklets/leaflets	82	94

A major proportion of our sample population have not yet had any exposure to films, commercial or those carrying family planning messages. Despite this fact they consider film to be the most credible source of information.

TABLE XII: PERCENTAGES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES WHO NEVER HAD CONTACT WITH AND WHO NEVER PERCEIVED THE HELPFULNESS OF FAMILY PLANNING WORKERS

PERSONAL	NOT CONTACTING		NOT PERCEIVING HELPFULNESS	
	HUSBANDS	WIVES	HUSBANDS	WIVES
Govt. Doctor	78	80	77	23
FP Worker	75	88	85	30
ANM/Nurse	94	84	91	29

In general, government doctors, family planning workers and auxiliary nurse midwives are not perceived as being very helpful specially by those who have more frequent contacts with them.

PERCEPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING

TABLE XIII: PERCEPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING

Disadvantages for	Husbands %	Wives %
Mother	3.5	23.0
Father	4.0	25.0
Child	3.0	21.0
Community	3.0	19.0
Religion	4.0	18.0
Nation	3.5	19.0

TABLE XIV: PERCENTAGE OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDICATING IGNORANCE, UNWILLINGNESS TO KNOW, USAGE AND UNWILLINGNESS TO TRY OR USE, SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL FOR VARIOUS FAMILY PLANNING METHODS

Family Planning Methods	PERCENTAGE IGNORANT		PERCENTAGE UNWILLING TO KNOW		PERCENTAGE NOT USING OR TRYING		PERCENTAGE UNWILLING TO TRY OR USE		PERCENTAGE PERCEIVING SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL	
	Husband	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
NIRODH	15	40	54	59	73	86	61	80	54	52
LOOP	46	36	54	57	94	88	70	82	81	72
VASECTOMY	2	9	52	62	98	98	86	99	94	90
TUBECTOMY	3	13	54	60	99	97	86	82	94	88

Table XIV shows that respondents perceive greater disapproval regarding sterilisation as compared to spacing methods. It would also appear that family planning is thought of mainly as sterilisation.

TABLE XV: IDEALS OF FAMILY PLANNING AS CONCEIVED BY BOTH HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Ideals	Husbands	Wives
Spacing after marriage (years)	3	3
Spacing between babies (years)	2	2
Number of boys desired	2	2
Number of girls desired	1	1

Table XV shows two different ideals of spacing, that is, between marriage and the first child and between two subsequent children. The majority of both husbands and wives thought three years an ideal spacing, which is also advocated by the family planning programme. 93 percent of the respondents did not mention any disadvantages of spacing. However, the disadvantages of a protracted period of child-bearing and conformity to traditional family norms in favour of large families were mentioned as negative factors affecting opinions regarding the ideal spacing period. Among the advantages 90 percent of the respondents reported that the health of the child was the most important, followed by well-being of family, health of mother, material and psychological benefits. Table XV indicates the ideal family size, that is, the desired number of boys and girls, as separately desired by husbands and wives. It is unrealistic to advocate an ideal family size in terms of the total number of children desired as everybody makes a distinction between the number of boys and girls desired; when asked to mention the disadvantages of a small family 33 percent did not mention a single one. Others, however, mentioned, in order of importance, shortage of labour, high rate of infant morbidity, insecurity in old age, and danger of going against the law of nature and family (which are in favour of large families). A large family is held to be an insurance of sorts against these disadvantages.

PERCENTAGE  
RECEIVING  
SOCIAL  
DISAPPROVAL

WIVES

4 52  
1 72  
4 90  
4 88

TABLE XVI: PERCENTAGES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDICATING 'NO NEED' FOR SPACING AND STERILIZATION OF FAMILY PLANNING.

Family Planning Methods	Not needing	
	Husbands	Wives
Spacing	51	68
Sterilization	86	73

TABLE XVII: PERCENTAGES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDICATING NO NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE CONCEPTION, AND CONTRACEPTION AT THE TIME OF MARRIAGE

Phenomenon	Having no knowledge		Having no need	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Sexual Intercourse	29	80	17	46
Conception	65	85	21	48
Contraception	76	96	29	65

TABLE XVIII: PERCENTAGES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDICATING REASONS FOR NOT WANTING TO KNOW OR TRY FAMILY PLANNING METHODS

	Knowing/ Using	Not needing	Indifferent	Against
Husbands knowledge	31	25	23	23
Husbands trial	17	26	23	35
Wives knowledge	27	38	13	22
Wives trial	12	41	17	29

In the second study a total of 40 workers from different job categories currently posted in three blocks of Saharanpur District - Sarsawa, Deoband and Nagal - were interviewed at their respective places of work.

The following is a brief description of these workers with regard to their socio-economic background - age, education, marital status, average number of children among married workers; training in family planning, duration of work in the fields of health and family planning, with special reference to their current jobs in rural areas. (See Table I)

#### BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICERS (BMO)

The BMOs have the overall responsibility of providing leadership to the entire health and family planning staff, of coordinating their work for health care and family planning services to an estimated population of 85,000 citizens in each block. They are also charged with the responsibility of ensuring adequate supplies of equipment, drugs, contraceptives, as well as the educational materials needed by the extension workers for carrying out their work in promoting family planning among the young married couples. They are also in charge of the inservice training of all the workers in their respective areas.

Four Medical Officers, working in the two blocks - Deoband and Sarsawa, were interviewed in order to assess their levels of commitment to the family planning programme, and to determine the likelihood of their cooperation in the development of the proposed media materials, to be provided to their respective teams of village workers in carrying out family planning extension work more effectively.

Three out of the four officers interviewed here were married, and had an average of two children each. Three of them reported that they came from rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Whereas they had spent an average of 5.2 years in the health department, having worked in urban and rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, their average experience in family planning was not more than one year. Thus, they did not appear to be very happy with the added responsibility of promoting family planning work, which is usually looked down upon by the community.

TABLE I: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Workers' Categories	BEE	FPHA	LHV	ANM	BMO
Sample Size	3	13	6	14	4
Variables					
Sex of the respondent	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male
Average age in years	33.70	26.70	24.00	34.50	31.25
Percent Married	100.00	92.30	33.30	92.86	75.00
Average number of children	2.70	2.00	1.50	2.23	2.00
Average number of sons	1.00	0.17	0.50	1.08	1.67
Percent with Rural Background	100.00	84.60	66.60	21.42	75.00
Average years of Experience in Health Programme	7.30	2.64	3.40	8.17	5.20
Average number of years in service in family planning	7.30	2.64	2.80	5.24	1.00
Average duration of service in years at present post	5.60	2.64	2.80	3.91	2.00
Average number of years of service in Rural Areas	7.30	2.64	3.40	5.81	3.20
Average years of stay at the present place	3.90	1.55	1.80	2.45	2.00

### BLOCK EXTENSION EDUCATORS (BEE)

Three BEEs, one from each block, were interviewed with regard to their current roles in providing leadership to the male and female workers in planning, supervising and coordinating their educational and motivational activities for promoting family planning adoption among the young married couples, covering an estimated population of 85,000 to one lakh in each block. All the three respondents had very high academic qualifications, Master's degrees in one of the Social Sciences and had an average of 7.3 years service in the family planning programme. All three were married with an average of 2.7 children. These highly educated BEEs, almost in their mid-thirties, with high academic qualifications, and a fairly long period of service in the rural areas appear to be well qualified to meet the requirements of their jobs. But their response patterns to the subsequent questions indicated a high level of frustration and dissatisfaction with the nature of duties they were expected to perform in the target-oriented family planning programme. They found the short-term training of the maximum duration of 30 days inadequate, and they were most unhappy about the sterilisation targets, in that they had to concentrate on collecting vasectomy cases, even at the cost of their duties as 'educators', 'supervisors' and 'coordinators'. Lack of physical facilities, vague job descriptions, poor coordination of activities of other workers in the programme, large areas of operation with limited transport facilities, with practically nothing to offer in terms of tangible services for community welfare, they feel unwanted by the people, in general, and 'ill-treated' by their superiors. Although they were fairly satisfied with the monetary benefits provided by their present jobs, all three of them said that if they were offered another job with similar benefits, they would like to switch over to the other job. Lack of job security was another important problem faced by them in their nebulous work.

### FAMILY PLANNING HEALTH ASSISTANTS (FPHA)

The FPHA is a male worker who carries out family planning extension work at the peripheral level in accordance with the block plan. He works directly under the supervision of the BEE to assist him in

(a) conducting inservice training programmes for the village

level workers including the local opinion leaders, depot holders,

(b) organising mass education activities such as film shows, group meetings, family planning exhibitions, etcetera, and

(c) in coordinating his extension education activities with those of the personnel working in related welfare programmes such as the Community Development Programmes or functional literacy for farmers, or nutrition education for young mothers. This particular category of male worker situated at the peripheral level is vital for our study, in that the FPFA happens to provide the closest link between the community, the female workers in the periphery, that is, the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and the administration at the block level.

A total of 13 FPFA's working in different areas of the three blocks of Sarsawa, Deoband and Nagal were interviewed with the help of a structured questionnaire designed for eliciting data in line with the same overall objective as stated above.

These workers belong to a comparatively younger age group, with an average age of 26.7 years, all but one were married and had an average of 2 children, mostly females (see Table I). Almost 85 percent of them came from rural areas, over one third had bachelor's degrees, and the rest of them had received formal education ranging between High School, and Intermediate college education. They had spent an average of 2.64 years in service, mainly in family planning in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, with an average of 1.55 years at their current places of work. None of these workers had received any kind of orientation training in family planning prior to doing their work as FPFA's; and less than 50 percent had thus far attended the inservice training courses, usually of a duration of about 30 days, on the same lines as that of the BEE's. These workers, who are supposed to be the key people entrusted with the important job of serving an average population of 2,000 to 3,000 scattered in about 15 villages with health care facilities and family planning services, especially for males, find themselves ill-equipped with the technical skills, medical supplies, including contraceptives, and transport facilities considered necessary for effective performance of their duties. With little or no training in family planning, inadequate supervision and guidance from the BEE, they seem to be overwhelmed and at

times overawed by their precarious situation especially when they have to meet the target for sterilisation from a population which may turn hostile. Almost 50 percent of these workers said they would like to change their job if an alternative was possible, and over 30 percent found their current salaries inadequate to meet their daily requirements with the rising cost of living. These workers appear to have little knowledge of their job functions. When asked about the details of their activities, almost all of them admitted that their daily visits to various villages boiled down to a 'formality' and that they really did not feel they were doing useful service to the community.

#### LADY HEALTH VISITORS (LHV)

Usually there are two LHVs located at the Primary Health Centre whose main job is to provide maternity and child health services and family planning advice to young married women through the PHC clinic, and to supervise the work of ANMs, covering a population of around 3,000 people. LHVs are also in charge of the Dai training programmes.

A total of 6 LHVs working in the three blocks under study were interviewed, their average age was 24 years, and only two of them were married; one had two children and the other only one child at the time of the interview. Around 2/3 of them came from a rural background. The average duration of their service in the rural areas was 3.4 years and they had an average of 2.8 years service in the family planning programmes. All these young female workers who are entrusted with heavy supervisory responsibilities happen to be directly appointed to these positions with no prior experience in family planning work. When asked about the distribution of their time spent on various job functions they reported that the maximum amount of time was spent in the field and only an average of 10.3 hours per week were spent in providing clinical services. It is not surprising to note that only one of these six workers felt respected by the village community. They were, however, not too dissatisfied with their working conditions and the monetary benefits associated with their jobs. (See Table II and III).

#### AUXILIARY NURSE MIDWIVES (ANM)

The ANM has the pivotal role in the family planning programme

of India, in that these trained female workers are entrusted with the job of providing actual services for maternity and child health care as well as family planning in the rural areas. A total of 14 ANMs located in different areas of the three blocks under study were interviewed at their places of residence and work. These female workers were a comparatively older group, with an average age of 34.5 years, all but one of whom were married and had an average of 2.23 children each. Almost 80 percent of these female workers, who reported that they had spent an average of 5-8 years of service in rural areas, originally come from cities. (See Table I)

This category of workers, consisting of about one third of the total number of respondents of this study, appear to be comparatively more effective in the performance of their job functions. Their success is also reflected by their positive self concepts, in terms of the respect and appreciation accorded to them by the village communities in their areas of operation. Their association with family planning work obviously did not spoil their image in the community as it did in the case of the other workers, for example, BEEs, FPHAs and even LHVs (See Table II). All of them reported having undergone formal training ranging between 16 months to 2 years before or after joining their work in family planning.

In spite of their intensive training in skills in the maternity and child health care services, these female workers reported that they spent the maximum amount of their time in doing field work for promotion of family planning work in the target oriented family planning programme; almost all the ANMs in this study sample indicated their inability to provide high quality services for maternity and child health care. In common with the other categories of workers interviewed during the course of this study, these workers complained about the obvious lack of transport facilities, and the apathetic attitudes of their seniors. They felt that their work was also being hampered due to inadequate supplies of medicine, and lack of cooperation from the block level staff in providing medical treatment to the cases referred to them by the village level workers. Poor quality of supervision from the block level staff is indicated by these workers having to report separately to the BMO, BEE, LHV or any other senior staff members in their area especially as none of them had

TABLE II: RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF JOB FUNCTIONS AND JOB SATISFACTIONS

Workers' Categories	BEE	FPHA	LHV	ANM
Sample Size	3	13	6	14
Statements regarding job functions & job satisfaction				
A. Understanding of job functions				
1. Very Good	0	7.69%	0	14.29%
2. Good	66.60%	23.08%	16.67%	14.29%
3. Satisfactory	0	38.46%	50.00%	50.00%
4. Vague	33.30%	30.77%	33.33%	24.42%
B. Job Satisfaction of workers				
1. Feel respected by the community	0	23.08%	16.67%	57.14%
2. Satisfied with monetary benefits	66.60%	69.23%	66.67%	64.29%
3. Satisfied with working conditions	33.30%	53.85%	83.33%	57.14%

NOTE: Interviews with BMO's were concentrated mainly on their attitudes toward family planning rather than their job functions.

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TABLE III: DETAILS OF AVERAGE WEEKLY TIME IN HOURS SPENT ON DIFFERENT  
JOB FUNCTIONS BY DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF FAMILY PLANNING PERSONNEL.

Workers' Categories	BEE	FPHA	LHV	ANM
Sample Size	3	13	6	14
Job Functions				
1 Field Work	30.00	30.31	22.67	22.71
2 Travelling	8.00	10.31	8.67	4.00
3 Clinic	0	0	10.33	9.29
4 Record Keeping	3.50	5.62	5.33	4.14
Total Weekly Time	41.50	46.24	47.00	40.14

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received written instructions with regard to the specific job functions expected of them by their superiors. In spite of these difficulties and the constraints under which these female workers have to operate, it is obvious that these workers, as compared to their supervisors (LHVs), and their male counterparts in the field areas, have shown a remarkable capacity to understand and adjust to their situations, and to cope with the numerous problems in dealing with their superiors and in creating a useful role for themselves, and then projecting a positive image in village communities being assisted by them.

#### INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

All respondents from different categories were asked about

(i) the types of instructional materials which were used by their instructors in their preservice or inservice training,

(ii) instructional materials currently available to them for educational and motivational work for family planning in their areas of work,

(iii) the types of materials found useful in conveying the message of family planning more effectively and,

(iv) the types of materials they would like to have for

(a) imparting knowledge of human reproductive biology and

(b) motivational work for family planning among the rural young married couples.

All workers who had undergone preservice or inservice training for family planning mentioned films, charts and flash cards as the audiovisual aids used by their instructors during their training for their present jobs in family planning. When asked about the instructional materials currently available to them for carrying out family planning work extensively in their areas, over 70 percent ANMs and almost an equal proportion of LHVs said that they did not have access to any of the instructional aids for their daily work in conveying the message of family planning among their clients. However, over 92 percent of the FPHAs and one out of the three BELs from among the male respondents said that they had, at their disposal, flash cards as teaching aids for

conveying knowledge of different contraceptive devices to their clients. Printed leaflets and charts were mentioned by a few other workers, but none of the male and female workers interviewed in this study said they had access to any films or models for carrying out family planning extension work among the young married couples in reproductive age groups. (See Table IV)

The majority of the workers who had some of the above stated materials at their disposal named flash cards as the most useful audiovisual aid currently being used by them in their daily work. Printed literature and charts were mentioned by a few other male workers at the peripheral level. However, two thirds of the BEEs and LHVs situated at the block headquarters, (supervision of male and female workers at the village level being one of their principal job functions), said that they did not find any of the currently available teaching aids of any use in their daily work. (See Table IV). When asked about additional materials "considered useful, but not currently available to them", around 70 percent of the male and female workers at the peripheral level considered films on family planning to be the most effective medium for popularising family planning among the young married couples in rural areas. About two thirds of the female respondents (LHVs and ANMs) named flash cards as the next most important and useful aid for their family planning activities; charts and models and printed leaflets, were mentioned by a few other respondents from the block as well as village levels. Surprisingly enough, only one respondent (an ANM) mentioned puppet shows as a likely medium for conveying the message of family planning in their areas. The medical officers interviewed here, were most indifferent about their work in family planning and when asked about their needs in terms of teaching aids for them or their staff members for imparting knowledge of family planning among the eligible couples in their areas, they casually named 'films', 'charts' or 'models' as some of the teaching aids they had heard about or seen somewhere, which they might like to possess and display in their clinics.

When asked about their current practice with regard to "knowledge of human reproductive biology" as a preliminary step for educating their clients in specific birth control techniques, a large majority of the workers said that they did not consider it necessary or feasible, especially when they

TABLE IV: AVAILABILITY AND USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL WORK FOR FAMILY PLANNING BY DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF FAMILY PLANNING PERSONNEL.

Workers' Categories	BEE	FPHA	LHV	ANM
Sample Size	3	13	6	14
Instructional Materials				
A. Materials presently available				
1 Flash cards	33.30%	92.30%	33.30%	21.42%
2 Charts	33.30%	23.08%	16.67%	7.14%
3 Models	0	0	0	0
4 Literature	0	30.77%	0	0
5 Films	0	0	0	0
6 None	33.30%	0	56.60%	71.42%
B. Materials Considered useful				
1 Flash cards	33.30%	76.92%	33.30%	21.40%
2 Literature	0	15.38%	0	0
3 Charts	0	7.69%	0	0
4 None	66.60%	0	66.60%	0

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were dealing with illiterate people in rural areas. Some of them said it was embarrassing to talk about sexual matters to orthodox groups of people, especially when they did not possess any visual aids which could be shown to them as self-explanatory devices, without having to talk about the socially tabooed topics relating to the vital issue of contraception.

As shown in Table V, a large majority of the male and female workers at the block as well as village level, said that they would like to have films specifically designed for explaining human reproductive systems for male and female audiences as preliminaries for educating their clients in the proper use of different contraceptive devices. Considering the financial and technical difficulties involved in production and dissemination of films suited to the local culture, almost 79 percent of the female workers and 50 percent of the male workers from the block and village levels, stated that well designed and adequately illustrated 'flash cards' could be of great help in their daily activities for motivating and educating individual respondents in selection and use of appropriate birth control methods. Considering the limited exposure of these workers to the existing instructional material for family planning (Table IV), and their limited knowledge and understanding of the family planning methods, (Table VI), it is recommended that all of these workers be given additional training in the physical as well as technical aspects of birth control practices, before they are supplied with the additional material with a view to assisting them in family planning extension work in their respective areas.

#### COMPARATIVE DATA ON KNOWLEDGE OF VARIOUS CONTRACEPTIVES

In the motivational activities of family planning, the relationship between the family planning worker and the people is that of teacher and student, as far as the imparting of knowledge about various family planning methods is concerned. Therefore it is necessary that these communicators have adequate and correct knowledge of the various family planning methods, popular in the area. Though there is a long list of family planning methods which are offered to the public under the national programme, only those methods which are being practised by the people in this particular area were selected for studying the family planning worker's knowledge of contraceptives being

popularized by them in their respective areas. The idea was to measure the knowledge of workers in respect of the actual functioning of each method and its possible side effects. A thorough understanding of human reproductive biology by family planning workers is presumed here.

Each question was allotted two marks for all correct answers, one mark for semi-correct or incomplete answers and zero for no answer or incorrect answer. The answers of all the workers were scored and averages worked out for each category of workers. These have been presented in Table VI, giving details of workers' levels of knowledge with regard to each of the four contraceptive methods under consideration.

**TUBECTOMY:** It was encouraging to note that the middle level supervisors, that is, the BEEs and LHVs had a fairly good knowledge of tubectomy. But it was interesting to find that the LHVs, whose main concern was this method, knew less than her male counterpart. Perhaps a lower level of education of the former is responsible for the observed disparity. On the whole, both the functionaries had sufficient knowledge about the method to help them to carry out their educational work for promotion of female sterilisation among the target couples. Among the peripheral workers, the ANMs knew almost as much about tubectomy as their female supervisors (LHVs), but FPHAs knew very little about this method. They said that since it was not their duty to popularise contraceptives among the female population, they did not feel the need to learn the actual functioning of these methods. Considering the important role of the husband in the decision making process, for adoption of contraception even by the wife, it is considered imperative that the male family planning workers here (FPHAs) be given a thorough understanding of all the birth control methods, including those meant for females, in order to help them in educating and motivating the husbands of the likely female adopters of sterilisation in their areas.

**VASECTOMY:** As shown in Table VI, the BEEs had the highest scores with regard to their knowledge of male and female sterilisation. However, the female workers both at the block and peripheral levels had very little knowledge or understanding of vasectomy. In fact LHVs, who are supposed to supervise and guide the ANM's work on health and family planning, knew less about this method than the rest of the workers in their areas, including ANMs. This apparent

lack of knowledge of vasectomy among family planning personnel, male or female, which happens to be one of the most important methods being promoted through the national family planning programme, is a matter of grave concern for the future training programmes under the 'Multipurpose Worker Scheme'.

LOOP: The loop, or intra uterine contraceptive device (IUCD), is by far the most widely known, but poorly understood by the worker as well as the general population of this country. The male and female workers of family planning interviewed for this study, were equally ill-informed about this contraceptive device, which has by now gained universal unpopularity among rural and urban citizens of India. Observations based on this study, coupled with knowledge and insights gained from several follow up studies of earlier adopters of IUCD from different parts of the country, lead us to believe that the utter failure of IUCD as part of India's family planning programme can probably be traced to the poorly trained, and inadequately equipped family planning workers. While the female workers carried on doing IUCD insertions indiscriminately, without screening them for possible side effects, the male extension workers failed to impart correct knowledge regarding the functioning of this method, giving way to serious misconceptions and rumours, leading to irreparable damage to the image of the national family planning programme.

RHYTHM METHOD: As in the case of tubectomy, BEEs (4.00), had the highest knowledge score for this method too. This category of workers seem to know everything about this method. A possible explanation for this observation may be their higher level of education and comparatively longer period of experience in family planning work. The female workers, LHVs (2.33) and ANMs (2.21) had more or less the same amount of knowledge about this method, that is, both had inadequate knowledge about the rhythm method of family planning. The female workers especially should have a thorough knowledge about this natural method. Any female worker could gain the confidence of the client by talking authoritatively about this method. FPHAs (1.31) had the least knowledge about this method. If this method is to be used to any advantage, it is essential that the male family planning workers (FPHAs) should know all about it in order to equip the husband with the facts.

NIRODH: This is by far the most popular and easy to use method of family planning. The male members of the staff BEEs (8.00) and FPHAs (7.54) had more or less complete knowledge about this method. In fact, during the investigations it was found that if there was any convenient, universally accepted contraceptive, it was Nirodh. Neither the workers nor the public faced any difficulty about this method. Though female workers LHVs (6.35) and ANMs (6.93) had a workable knowledge about this method, it would be desirable for them to acquire complete knowledge about this method, since in many cases they provide supplies, on their home visits, to the wives of the cases motivated by male workers.

An overall picture of Table VI shows that BEEs (40.33) had the highest knowledge about all the methods under consideration. Next to the BEE, LHVs (32.18) and ANMs (33.15) had more or less the same level of knowledge, the FPFA (30.78) had by far the lowest score, indicating their lack of knowledge and understanding of the use of the various family planning methods. Two glaring facts should be kept in mind: first

that the supervisory female staff (LHVs) know less (32.18) than their subordinate ANMs (33.15) and second that the FPFA, who is an important agent for the dissemination of family planning knowledge among the male audience, who, in fact, are the decision makers, had the lowest knowledge and understanding of all contraceptive methods which are meant to be popularised by them, especially among the rural male population. It will not be out of place to stress that efforts should be made to educate these workers during their pre-media exposure training so as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to use the new media to maximum advantage.

#### WORKER'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING

The level of participation, and the likely success of any human endeavour depends, to a great extent, on the personal commitment to and belief in the worth of that particular cause. Thus, a study of beliefs and attitudes of family planning workers regarding the concept of family limitation, and use of contraception was considered relevant in the light of future needs for selection and training of family planning personnel under the 'Multipurpose Workers Scheme' which has been recently introduced in the National Family Planning Programme. A study of attitudes of family planning

TABLE VI: COMPARATIVE DATA ON KNOWLEDGE OF VARIOUS CONTRACEPTIVES AMONG THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF FAMILY PLANNING PERSONNEL.

Workers' Categories	BEE	FPHA	LHV	ANM
Sample Size	3	13	6	14
Contraceptive Methods				
1 Tubectomy (Maximum score 12)	11.33	6.85	10.00	9.29
2 Vasectomy (Maximum score 12)	10.67	9.23	6.33	6.86
3 Loop (Maximum score 12)	6.33	5.85	7.17	6.86
4 Rhythm (Maximum score 4)	4.00	1.31	2.33	2.21
5 Nirodh (Maximum score 8)	8.00	7.54	6.35	6.93
6 Total score (Maximum score 48)	40.33	30.78	32.18	33.15

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workers in the three blocks of Saharanpur district was attempted with the help of a standardised attitude scale developed by Dr BB Chatterjee of the Gandhian Institute of Development Studies, Varanasi. This attitude scale consists of a total of 15 verbal statements reflecting positive or negative views on problems and issues related directly or indirectly to the concept of family planning and use of contraception. Each one of these items is assigned an individual score depending upon the intensity of the positive or negative feeling towards family planning. Individual scores for each respondent is calculated by adding the "scale values" of the statements marked by the respondent, and then dividing the total score by the number of items responded to. Likewise average scores for each category of workers was calculated by adding the individual scores of the respondents in that particular category and dividing it by the number of respondents.

Our study of attitudes of five different categories of Family Planning Workers from the three blocks - Deoband, Sarsawa and Nagal has indicated that the FPHAs had the highest average score, that is (7.69), indicating highest level of approval of family planning among these young male workers located at the peripheral level. The ANMs, female workers who are in charge of health and family planning activities in an estimated rural population of about 10,000 each, also located at the peripheral level, had the next highest score, thus indicating a high degree of approval of birth control methods.

Among the block level workers the Medical Officers -- four in number, and the six LHVs interviewed here, had almost identical average scores on the attitude scale described above. The BEEs had by far the lowest average score, indicating comparatively lower level of approval of family planning programmes and the use of birth control techniques. However, the overall approval of family planning among the workers interviewed in this study was higher than the expected response patterns from the general population in that area.

An analysis of response patterns of these five categories of workers with regard to individual statements leads to an interesting observation. (See Table VII) The first statement, "Scientific methods of birth control are not harmful", was

agreed upon by all the male and female workers at the peripheral level and all the Medical Officers in this sample. However only two out of the three BEEs and four out of six LHVs indicated their agreement with the above statement. Thus, one third of the BEEs and LHVs, concerned with the responsibilities of providing technical supervision to the peripheral workers, expressed their obvious doubts about the harmlessness of the birth control methods which are theoretically being popularized by them in the areas under their jurisdiction.

All the respondents, except for two of the four Medical Officers in the sample groups, disagreed with the statement, "birth control reduces marital relations to the level of vice". It is surprising to note that medical officers responsible for health and family planning services endorse such a concept which happens to be negatively associated with family planning. It is difficult to find a rational explanation for a strongly irrational belief expressed by the two out of the four Medical Officers interviewed, who are a part of the study of family planning personnel in Saharanpur district. None of the other workers, except for one medical officer, indicated his agreement with the statement, "there is no justification for birth control under any condition".

Almost all the respondents, except one out of the three BEEs, and one out of a total of 13 FPHAs, agreed with the statement, "birth control increases the happiness of married life". Some contradiction is observed here in the responses of medical personnel with regard to the role of contraception in the marital life of the couple. (See Table VII, items 3 and 4).

When asked about their opinions as to whether birth control information should be made available to everybody, over 90 percent of the workers responded favourably to the idea of making birth control information universally available. (See Table VII, item 5)

None of the workers endorsed the drastically negative statement, "birth control should be absolutely prohibited", and a very small proportion of them agreed with the statement, "birth control is an expression of individual selfishness". (See Table VII, items 8 and 6)

TABLE VII: PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS INDICATING AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING.

Workers' Categories	MO	BEE	LHV	FPHA	ANM
Sample Size	4	3	6	13	14
Statements					
1 Scientific methods of birth control are not harmful (scale value 6.8)	100.00	66.67	66.67	100.00	100.00
2 Birth control reduces the marital relation to the level of vice (scale value 1.7)	50.00	0	0	0	0
3 There is no justification for birth control under any condition (scale value 0.8)	25.00	0	0	0	0
4 Birth control increases the happiness of married life (scale value 8.0)	100.00	66.67	100.00	92.31	100.00
5 Birth control information should be available to everybody (scale value 8.3)	100.00	100.00	83.30	92.30	92.91
6 Birth control is an expression of individual selfishness (scale value 3.1)	0	66.67	16.7	7.67	7.14
7 Birth control is the only solution to many of our social problems (scale value 9.6)	75.00	33.30	83.30	38.50	21.43
8 Birth control should be absolutely prohibited (scale value 0.9)	0	0	0	0	0
9 Birth control has both advantage and disadvantages (scale value 5.4)	100.00	66.67	100.00	100.00	92.90
10 People should be free to do whatever they wish about birth control (scale value 5.8)	75.00	0	66.67	53.85	57.14

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TABLE VII: CONTINUED

Workers' Categories	MO	BEE	LHV	FPHA	ANM
Sample Size	4	3	6	13	14
Statements					
11 Birth control is justifiable only in cases of poverty or poor health (scale value 6.4)	0	33.33	66.67	38.40	57.14
12 The practice of birth control may be injurious physically, mentally or morally to both men and women alike (scale value 3.3)	0	33.33	0	7.69	0
13 Uncontrolled reproduction leads to overpopulation social unrest and war (scale value 9.2)	100.00	100.00	50.00	100.00	92.86
14 We should not only allow but enforce limitation in the size of families (scale value 10.3)	100.00	100.00	33.33	84.62	71.43
15 Contraceptive method injures women's health (scale value 3.5)	0	33.33	16.67	0	0
AVERAGE SCORE (7.53)	7.43	7.25	7.42	7.69	7.53

- NOTE: 1 Scale value of 4.9 to 5.9 reflects neutral attitudes (for example items 10 and 9)  
 2 Any value below 4.5 reflects negative attitudes, for example Items 3, 4 and 8, extremely negative and Items 15, 12, 6 and 2.  
 3 The remaining 7 items reflect varying degrees of positive attitudes towards family planning.

Almost all respondents agreed with a comparatively neutral statement, "birth control has both advantages and disadvantages". This is quite a realistic way of responding to such an uncontroversial statement regarding a universally controversial problem: of placing limits on the so called 'natural' course of events. (See Table VII, item 9)

Hundred percent of the male respondents working at the block and peripheral levels agreed with the statement, "uncontrolled reproduction leads to over population, social unrest and war". Likewise, all but one male respondent (FPHA) agreed with another statement, "we should not only allow, but enforce limitation on the family size". A comparatively lower percentage of female workers, especially LHVs, agreed with the idea of enforcing limitation on family size, and a few of them disagreed with the views expressed in an earlier statement regarding over population leading to social unrest and war. (See Table VII, items 13 and 14)

Very interesting response patterns have been elicited by the statement "birth control is the only solution to many of our social problems". Over two thirds of the male and female workers located at the peripheral levels in the rural areas under study did not agree with the above statement, implying that birth control was not the only answer to many of our social problems. These workers, through their experiences have, perhaps, made some observations regarding the problems and potentials of rural citizens, which may be more realistic than the quick solutions being proposed by the 'urban elite'.

#### PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES PERCEIVED BY THE WORKERS AND THE REMEDIES SUGGESTED BY THEM.

It is desirable to locate the various problems and difficulties which are faced by the family planning workers at the different levels, before we develop new and effective media for their use. All the family planning workers, BEEs, LHVs, FPHAs and ANMs were asked to list their problems and difficulties, and suggest possible remedies envisaged by them.

#### 1 PLANNING

INCREASED INCENTIVE IN 1972: The government of India, in order to motivate a greater number of people to adopt family planning, substantially increased monetary incentives for

sterilisation; as a result, people do not agree, now, to undergo sterilisation for smaller amounts. Sometimes the integrity of the worker is in doubt and a good number of workers feel that such a situation is embarrassing for them.

**TARGETS:** The workers feel that since the programme is target oriented, they are not in a position to do good extension education work among their clientele, with the result that even if people adopt family planning, they do not understand the concept of family planning in its proper perspective. This leads to undesirable and harmful consequences. Some of the workers were frank enough to admit that many a time, in order to achieve the targets, they (the workers) resort to getting ineligible cases, and furnish false particulars about their clients.

**SUGGESTIONS:** Workers felt that planning was faulty and many suggested that the Government should do away with the targets, and instead evolve better and more workable methods for effective supervision of the day to day work of the family planning workers. The workers feel that offering monetary incentives does more harm to the cause of family planning than good.

Also, to satisfy the people about the prevalent monetary incentives, which are many times lower than 1972's incentives, the government should bring out some authentic facts giving the current level of monetary compensations for adopters of male and female sterilisation.

## 2 ADMINISTRATION

**UNFAVOURABLE ATTITUDE OF THE SUPERVISORS TOWARDS THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME:** Some workers, especially BEEs and FPHAs were of the view that officials at a higher level, MOs in particular, do not give proper support to the programme. Their casual interest in family planning cases, coupled with the fact that the follow up of sterilised cases is inadequate, or even non-existent, leads to dissatisfaction and subsequently to anti family planning propaganda.

**LACK OF CLEARLY DEFINED LINES OF AUTHORITY:** The BEE who is supposed to organise the entire programme at the block level complained about his inability to supervise the female peripheral workers effectively, who, in fact showed

allegiance to LHVs only. There are no clear instructions by the department in this regard.

**TEMPORARY JOBS:** The family planning workers feel most insecure due to the temporary nature of their jobs. This constant worry does not permit them to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the execution of the programme. A few of them, in fact have had to resign from their jobs due to non-fulfilment of the targets.

**LACK OF PERSONAL SUPERVISION:** It is felt by the workers that the administration neglects personal supervision; on the other hand, bureaucratic interference from higher officials in the day to day working of the peripheral workers creates confusion and disorder.

**DELAY IN PAYMENTS:** The workers said that there were arrears and delays in the payment of their travelling allowance, and salaries were invariably delayed. This caused financial problems and undue worries for them and their families.

**CORRUPT PRACTICES:** The bills of the workers are not passed without deducting a commission, an illegal gratification claimed by the staff at district level. The hospital staff demands 'bakshish' from the sterilized cases; otherwise these cases are treated badly.

**RECORDS:** Family Planning workers are supposed to maintain a large number of records; this imposes undue strain on their time and energy.

Since all the PHCs have at least one MO for family planning programmes, it would be desirable if that particular MO could look after the implementation of the family planning programme exclusively, without causing any more tension and confusion among the workers from Health and Family Planning Programmes.

The BEEs should be given a free hand in organising the family planning activities at the block level. For this a proper coordination among all the peripheral workers, male as well as female, is necessary. Therefore, clear instructions should be issued to female staff to respect the instructions issued by the BEEs.

There should be provision to make the jobs permanent. This

will provide incentives to the worker and at the same time will ease the tension of insecurity.

Effective supervision of peripheral workers should ensure a better defined working environment.

The salaries and travelling allowance of the field staff should be paid in time and they should be protected against all official harrasment in this regard.

A fresh study of the records maintained by the family planning staff is necessary. A consolidated recording would reduce the unnecessary demands on the time of family planning workers.

### 3 ORGANISATION

**ALLOTMENT OF AREAS:** Some of the workers felt that the areas allotted to them were too scattered, whereas a few others felt that their areas were unapproachable. One of the female workers complained that half of her areas was across a canal which had no bridge over it. The workers who had their villages scattered at a distance from each other, lost a good number of their working hours in travelling to and from those distant areas.

**NO AUTHORITY TO THE WORKER:** Unlike VLWs, who could get the villagers a few things from the government, like cement, fertilizer, oil, rations, remission of land revenues, family planning workers have no such authority, which makes them unwelcome in the rural community.

**LACK OF TRAINING:** The family planning workers, specially the FPHAs and the BEEs reported that they did not receive sufficient training. Since none of them were given any preservice training and a good number of FPHAs were not given even inservice training, they felt themselves to be inadequately trained for their jobs.

**INADEQUATE PUBLICITY:** Some of the workers felt that the activities of the family planning programme should be given greater publicity in order to make them more popular.

**DELAY IN PAYMENT TO CASES:** The sterilized cases are not paid incentive money in time, and it affects the

credibility of the workers adversely.

LACK OF COORDINATION in health and family planning departments leads to neglect of the family planning cases. The family planning cases are not given proper medical care during the operation or after it. This contributes to propaganda against family planning programmes.

NO ESCORT FOR FEMALE STAFF: The nature of their job necessitates that female staff visit odd places at odd hours, especially when performing deliveries. In the absence of an escort the female staff feel insecure and many a time, they are forced to neglect their duties.

SUGGESTIONS: The areas should be re-allocated and consolidated so that travelling is reduced to a minimum.

The family planning worker, like VLWs, should be given a little authority, at least in the health field, like being able to issue medicines for minor ailments, or giving referral slips for the PHC or hospital, or being able to attend to basic health and sanitary needs of his or her clientele.

For the efficient discharge of their duties, it is necessary that all the family planning workers should be given preservice training in family planning and elementary health programmes.

The family planning cases should be properly looked after after the operation. In the opinion of some of the workers, a mishandled or dissatisfied case nullifies the effect of 100 satisfied cases. Because contrary to the popular business slogan, the satisfied don't tell others but the dissatisfied tell all.

There is no doubt that the female workers do need protection because of the circumstances in which they have to work. Perhaps coordination of their tour programmes with those of their male counterparts may solve the problem to some extent.

Simple administrative streamlining is necessary for prompt payment of incentives to the cases, which will save the worker some embarrassment.

#### 4 TRANSPORT

**NO ROADS:** Some of the family planning workers, specially females, felt the hardship of reaching places which had no connecting roads. Since there were no roads, no transport was possible to connect their headquarters and these villages, and because of the distances it was not possible for the workers to walk to these remote places.

**NO TRANSPORT:** The middle level supervisors, BEEs and LHVs complained that they were not provided with transport to go to the more distant places, with the result that they omitted their regular visits to supervise the peripheral level workers.

**SUGGESTIONS:** Medical Officers have the use of official vehicles to visit places not connected by public transport. The workers suggested that they accompany the medical officer on such visits, though the practice is not in vogue at present.

#### 5 SUPPLIES

**NO MEDICINES:** A very large number of workers from all categories felt that they did not have anything to offer as incentive to the public. Even the simple medicines for minor ailments, which would help them to be wanted by the people, are not given to them.

**INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF NIRODH:** The workers felt that inadequate and delayed supplies of Nirodh proved a great handicap in discharging their duties.

**LACK OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL:** Most of the workers reported that they had very scarce or no instructional materials. If they were provided with these materials it would facilitate their educational and motivational activities.

**SUGGESTIONS:** It was suggested by the workers that the department should make efforts to supply them with some medicines, Nirodh, and necessary instructional materials in order to strengthen their role in providing health and family planning services to their clientele.

6 SOCIAL

RELIGION: "Religion, specially Islam, speaks against family planning and nothing is done by the department to bring these fanatics into their fold by planned reasoning", said some workers.

NON COOPERATION BY THE PEOPLE: People do not have a sense of participation in this programme; they are not only indifferent, but deliberately oppose the family planning activities of the workers.

SCHEDULED CASTES: Scheduled castes, who rely merely on the strength of their numbers, in the absence of other material assets, feel that the adoption of family planning would threaten their very existence. They naturally resist the family planning workers.

UNSAFE AREAS: Some of the villages have a high incidence of criminal activities. Therefore, the family planning staff, with whom no one has any sympathies, feel unsafe in those areas. Some male members have lost their cycles and wrist watches on the way. The female staff feel even more insecure.

MEN FOLK ARE DISRESPECTFUL: Family planning is concerned with intimate aspects of human life. It is felt that women, especially, should not discuss these subjects and when they do the men are vulgar and disrespectful.

SUGGESTIONS: Almost all the workers were of the opinion that the planners must do something to improve the image of the programme.

7 RUMOURS AGAINST VARIOUS FAMILY PLANNING METHODS

The family planning programme in our country suffers more on account on hearsay than on account of the actual facts. On the basis of the studies undertaken so far on the subject, it may be said that a single rumour against a method can do more harm than the good done by 100 successful cases.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance to know the prevalent rumours in the area against the popular methods. An effort was also made to assess the attitude of the communicators

(Family Planning Workers) towards such rumours.

In Table VIII rumours heard by personnel involved in the family planning programme are listed. The data is organised according to the particular birth control method in question. The percentage of the different categories of workers who felt that a rumour was true is also shown.

#### TUBECTOMY

**CONCEPTION AFTER TUBECTOMY:** This rumour was mentioned by both Medical Officers and the LHVs and one LHV even agreed with it. This could happen if the woman was already pregnant at the time when the operation was performed.

**STERILISATION IS AGAINST RELIGION:** One out of three BEEs and one FPWA were convinced that this was true.

**EXCESSIVE BLEEDING AFTER TUBECTOMY:** Except for the MO who performed the operation, all the other categories of workers agreed to some extent that tubectomy causes excessive bleeding; this can happen because of carelessness on the part of the operating team, inadequate after care and also disregard of instructions and precautions regarding post-operational care by the patient.

**TUBECTOMY CAUSES CANCER:** Workers mentioned that such a rumour prevailed, though none of them agreed with it; however, such a rumour is enough to create doubt and apprehension in the public. If this is at all true then perhaps in some cases the patient may have had cancer before the operation, and in others, women sometimes mistake excessive bleeding for a symptom of cancer.

**TUBECTOMY CAUSES DEATH:** Though several workers had heard the rumour none of them agreed with it. The basis for such a rumour could be a stray case where perhaps death was coincidental and occurred soon after the operation. The villagers naturally associated it with the operation.

#### VASECTOMY

**VASECTOMY CAUSES IMPOTENCE:** This fact is reported by all the

categories of respondents. It is significant to note that 33.3 percent of BEEs and 28.56 percent of ANMs and one FPFA agree with this rumour. These workers go into the field and come across cases, and are able to study the problem at close quarters. That the ANMs agree with the rumour has a special significance insofar as their informants are the wives of sterilised cases, and who are, in a way, the aggrieved party. It would be unfair to doubt their version since no wife would like to mention this unless there were some evidence for it. Even if we accept the inference of the planners that such a state is due to psychological reasons, the fact remains that the community believes it.

**CAUSES DEBILITY AND WEAKNESS:** All the categories of workers had come across it, and a still higher percentage of them (as is clear from Table VIII) agree with it. It would be arbitrary to deny a fact which is vouched for by a good number of the people who are engaged in working on the programme every day.

**VASECTOMY AGAINST RELIGION:** As in the case of Tubectomy, two BEEs agree with it.

**CAUSES DEATH:** Investigations showed that only those workers who are engaged at the peripheral level heard about this rumour. It seems to be local gossip, encouraged by mischief mongers. Local cases of vasectomy may be used to illustrate the falsity of the rumour.

**PREGNANCY AFTER VASECTOMY:** During this study only one ANM mentioned this rumour, but there is enough evidence from other studies that pregnancy does occur after vasectomy. This happens sometimes as the patients do not follow instructions given to them or because of the lack of adequate follow up. In many cases the men, as required, do not use Nirodh for three months after the operation, nor do they get their semen tested after the specified period; with the result that left over sperms in the vas cause pregnancy.

#### LOOP

**EXCESSIVE BLEEDING:** This is very much a physical condition, and according to available evidence, it exists.

**LOOP GOES INTO UPPER SYSTEM OF THE BODY:** Some people think that it travels as far as the head and heart, others feel it goes into the pelvic cavity or the stomach. Such rumours are reported to MOs too.

**CAUSES VENEREAL DISEASES:** Such a rumour is reported to the MO only. It seems that a stray case with some kind of vaginal affliction might have contracted VD with the use of the loop. For that matter, it would not be out of place if the causes and affects of venereal diseases are explained to the public as well as to the workers.

**SPOILS HEALTH AND CREATES COMPLICATION:** This is true in that the loop is not a universally suitable device for planning one's family. In many cases it just does not suit and in others complications are created by inserting the wrong size of loop or by faulty or deficient follow up.

**CAUSES CANCER:** Many workers had heard this, but only one ANN agreed with the rumour.

**LOOP'S THREAD INJURES THE PENIS:** It is a stray case, reported to only one BEE.

**PREGNANCY DURING ITS USE:** Can occur when it is expelled without the knowledge of the users. The methods of checking for its presence may be demonstrated clearly to the clients.

**DEATHS DUE TO ITS USE:** Like Tubectomy or Vasectomy, this method has also been associated with death.

**JOINING TOGETHER OF MAN AND WOMAN:** One LHV agreed with it. It is necessary to explain the physical impossibility of such a case, especially to the communicator.

**CAUSES CONSTANT HEADACHE:** Though only 16.66 percent of LHVs agree with it, it could be an instance of the loop being unsuited to the particular user.

**CAUSES WHITE DISCHARGE:** Could be true in some cases though no generalisation can be made.

NIRODH

**REDUCES SEXUAL PLEASURE:** Not only a rumour, 33.3 percent

of BEEs have agreed on the basis of their personal experiences.

IT BURSTS, RESULTING IN PREGNANCY: This rumour was often heard by the workers and 33.3 percent BEEs and 16.66 percent of the LHVs agreed that it was true.

In addition to the rumours mentioned above against the various methods, a few other rumours are prevalent in the area.

1 The workers are not able to pay the incentive money immediately to the cases, with the result that they are charged by the public for misappropriation.

2 In some cases a few irresponsible field workers in their eagerness to fulfil targets promised lands as incentive which they could not give. It created resentment in the public, thus making the task of the workers more difficult.

3 It is a common feeling in the area that most of the time beggars, unmarried men, widowers, the weak, and in short, ineligible people are sterilised.

4 The enhanced incentive for vasectomy during the intensive drive of 1971-72 created many doubts in the mind of the people and the reduced incentive at present is not acceptable to them. This has created a big problem for the workers.

TABLE VIII: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH THE RUMOURS.

Workers' Category	MO	BEE	LHV	FPHA	AM
Sample Size	4	3	6	13	14
RUMOUR					
TUBECTOMY					
1 Conception after Tubectomy	nil	0	16.66	0	0
2 Sterilisation against religion	nil	33.33	0	7.69	0
3 Excessive bleeding after Tubectomy	0	33.33	33.33	7.69	7.14
4 Tubectomy causes cancer	0	0	0	nil	0
5 Causes death	0	0	nil	nil	nil
6 Causes (specified)	0	0	33.33	7.69	14.28
VASECTOMY					
1 Causes impotency	nil	33.33	nil	7.69	28.56
2 Causes debility and weakness	nil	66.33	16.33	30.76	57.14
3 Vasectomy against religion	nil	33.33	0	0	0
4 Death due to vasectomy	0	0	0	nil	nil
5 Pregnancy after vasectomy	0	0	0	0	7.14
6 Causes complications	0	0	16.66	7.69	0

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TABLE VIII: CONTINUED

Workers' Category	MC	BEE	LHV	FPHA	ANM
Sample Size	4	3	6	13	14
RUMOUR					
LOOP					
1 Excessive Bleeding	25.00	nil	16.66	15.35	35.71
2 Goes inside the upper system	nil	nil	0	0	nil
3 Causes Venereal disease	nil	0	0	0	0
4 Spoils health and creates complications	nil	0	50.00	15.38	0
5 Causes cancer	nil	nil	nil	0	7.14
6 Its thread injures the penis	0	nil	0	0	0
7 Pregnancy during its use	0	0	nil	0	0
8 Death because of its use	0	0	nil	0	nil
9 Men and women join together after the intercourse	0	0	16.66	0	0
10 Causes constant headache	0	0	16.66	0	0
11 Causes white discharge	0	0	0	0	7.14
NIRODH					
1 It reduces sexual pleasure	0	33.33	0	0	0
2 It burst resulting in pregnancy	0	33.33	16.66	7.69	7.14

(0)='R' has not mentioned the particular rumour.

(nil)='R' has mentioned but does not agree with it.

The interviews with 40 family planning workers located at the village and block levels have indicated that inadequately trained and poorly motivated personnel, working under the leadership of 'self-centred and unsympathetic' Block Medical Officers, in the target oriented programme of family planning appear to have lost their faith in the programme and in their own ability to function creatively in providing 'useful services' to the target population.

The village level workers, especially the male workers gave a very dismal picture of their job situations and their perceived roles as family planning workers. They were pressurised by their seniors to bring in targeted numbers of cases for sterilisation. They met with resistance and negativism of the community which regards the family planning programmes as 'coercion for vasectomy or tubectomy' by these workers, desperately attempting to catch enough men for sterilisation, in order to preserve their jobs. The situation is compounded by the obvious lack of 'useful skills' and supplies of basic health and medical care, inadequate knowledge of human motivation and skills in understanding and shaping human behaviour, and poor quality of supervision from the block level staff members, mostly overlapping and at times hindering the functioning of their 'so-called team members'. The vicious circle continues, and in spite of the revised policies at the national levels, and frequent shifts in the administrative machinery, revised pay scales, and differently worded lists of functions and job titles of various categories of family planning personnel (in charge of serving large populations scattered in vast areas,) the central activity of the family planning programmes has come to revolve around 'sterilisation and targets'.

A large majority of Medical Officers, presently entrusted with the duties of providing 'creative leadership' to their respective 'teams' of health and family planning personnel at the peripheral, block, district, or state levels, do not perceive family planning work as an important part of their jobs. Their lack of commitment to the 'national programme of family planning' reflects in their attitudes toward their workers, and the quality of supervision provided by them, to the block and peripheral workers doing family planning extension education.

Lack of knowledge of the specific methods of birth control of the peripheral worker, with little or no audiovisual aids at their disposal, renders them almost ineffective in performing educational work for popularising birth control methods currently being made available through the government's family planning programme.

The negative perception, on the part of the community, of the 'key method, that is, sterilisation' was clearly demonstrated in the baseline survey which reported that 94 percent of male respondents consisting of the young married couples in the reproductive age group (wife's age 15-25 years), and 88 to 90 percent of the female respondents from the same group said that male and female sterilisation was socially disapproved, and 86 percent of male and 82-99 percent female respondents, from the same group, expressed their unwillingness to try or use this method for controlling their family sizes. In that event, the workers could perhaps shift their emphasis in providing 'Nirodh' which happens to be the most highly socially approved contraceptive in that area. However, ignorance was higher about Nirodh and Loop as compared to termination methods. There is high resistance to adoption of methods of birth control, particularly among women. Strangely enough, there is a discrepancy between the husband's and wife's reports of the use of Nirodh and Loop which suggest use without the knowledge of the partner.

The survey brought out that 78 to 80 percent of the sample population had never been approached by a government doctor in connection with family planning or otherwise.

Likewise, the survey observed that 75 to 94 percent of the same population had never been contacted by either male or female workers, in connection with health and family planning services. This indicates an appallingly low level of communication between the community and the personnel employed. There also seems to be an inverse relationship between contact and perceived helpfulness of Family Planning Workers.

The reported ideals of spacing of both husbands and wife correspond to the family planning programme norms as do their ideals of the number of children. Yet a majority are

unwilling to adopt any of the methods being currently propagated. A new contraceptive is indicated.

There is an inverse relation between credibility of mass media and the degree of exposure to it. Films are reported as the most credible source of information though a majority have never seen films. Newspapers and the written word rate high, though a majority cannot read.

Over 80 percent of the wives and 36 percent of men in the sample were totally illiterate, and there seems to be a very positive association between education and acceptance of family planning.

It should be kept in mind that these surveys were based on replies given which were not always statements of fact. Husbands and wives reported their years of married life differently, as also the number of boys and girls they had.

## CHAPTER III: FIELD WORK

### PROCESS OF ENDEAVOUR

The fieldwork began with a pretest of the baseline questionnaire in Jharoli village of Sarsawa Block in Saharanpur District.

During our initial visit to the village we were accompanied by the Statistical Officer from the district Family Planning Bureau and the FPFA for that area. It was felt that their presence would help establish the team's identity with the village Pradhan and also facilitate work for our survey. Though the FPFA was a great help in locating the respondents, yet because he was with us, the villagers tended to associate us with the local family planning staff.

A major problem before an interview, and to some extent even during the interview was to offset the suspicion, hostility and perhaps fear on the part of the respondents. Family planning has come to mean just one word 'nasbandi' or sterilisation, with the result that people, by and large, don't even like to talk about it, much less answer direct questions. Their fears are justified to some extent. The national family planning programme being a target oriented programme, all officials connected with it have only one objective in mind, and that is to fulfil the targets assigned to them, at any cost. This often means sterilisation under duress or with false promises of land or a job, and inadequate or even nonexistent follow up or post-operative care.

Once we were able to satisfy them that we had no connection with the Family Planning Department they agreed to being interviewed, though we suspect that their responses were still partly inhibited by suspicion. The constraint on wife's age (15-25) presented further problems. It was rarely possible to get the respondents alone - particularly the female respondents because the mother-in-law and other older women felt that the daughter-in-law was too young and ignorant to be able to answer our questions, and insisted on answering them themselves. Women from neighbouring households would also gather around the respondents, out of curiosity, and thus the ideal interview situation was not always possible. This was true of male respondents too, though to a lesser extent.

The results of the pretest were significant and the questionnaire was revised and finalised in view of the field experience. It was found during the pretest that family planning is not only a sensitive area but that hostility towards it makes it almost impossible to go to a village with just a family planning questionnaire as people are not prepared to even talk about it. When asked about their immediate problems most respondents, male and female, mentioned agricultural problems and issues like shortage of fertilisers, lack of irrigation facilities, non-availability of seeds and inadequate assistance from the officials, as their major problems; and these were issues they wanted to discuss. A section on agriculture was therefore incorporated in the baseline interview schedule. People were more receptive to the idea of talking about family planning if they felt we were interested in their other problems too.

While talking about family planning methods the pretest revealed that people generally talked about or knew only four methods which are propagated by the national programme: (1) vasectomy, (2) tubectomy, (3) nirodh and (4) loop. Other methods, including natural methods, did not appear to be known, or if they were, people were hesitant or may be shy to talk about them. It was felt that repeated questioning on those methods would not bring very fruitful responses so the matrix on knowledge, attitude, and practice of family planning methods was simplified to include only these four methods.

The finalised pre-coded structured interview schedule was administered in the four survey villages, that is, (1) Gunarsi, (2) Unchagaon, (3) Kuri and (4) Ghaloli, of Deoband Block, District Saharanpur. The field work was conducted by four interviewers (2 males and 2 females) over a period of one month. The sample size was the universe of couples (wife's age 15-25) in these four villages, with an estimated minimum of 250 couples. In all 199 couples were interviewed. The estimated number could not be interviewed due to a number of factors, which came to light during the actual field work. One of the factors was that though we were to interview all eligible couples in each of the four villages, there was no systematic way of locating them. The voters list, available with the village Pradhan and the Eligible Couple Registers maintained by the PHC, both of which we thought we could use as a starting point, were inaccurate and misleading and at times completely fictitious.

If some of the names and ages did tally, either the husband was not available or the wife was away to her "maika". Even house to house visits did not prove to be very workable as people were suspicious and doubtful and at certain points absolutely refused to give any information about members of the household much less about young married couples. We were repeatedly asked why we were interested only in the younger married couples, who they felt would not be able to give us any information and despite best efforts to convince them we found that

- (1) there were instances of refusal,
- (2) there were instances where interviews had to be dropped because the mother-in-law did not want an outsider to talk to her daughter-in-law,
- (3) as our target couples had not yet completed their family and in several cases did not have even one child, the elders in the house were wary of us - the fear of sterilisation being so strongly embedded in their minds they saw no sense in our wanting to talk to couples who had only one or two children.

Therefore the strategy adopted was to get the cooperation of the Pradhan and VLW (which was at times negligible) and a few influential families in the village who were sometimes older people, at times even young educated boys in the village, and school teachers, male or female, who clearly understood the purpose of our research. With the assistance of these people it was possible to establish contact with and interview all available couples in the age group 15-25 (wife's age).

One of the villages, Unchagaon, had no pucca road and had to be reached by tonga. The lack of 'pucca' road was actually a blessing in disguise for us, as this village had not had any exposure to family planning staff and because of this lack of exposure they were not only more hospitable and cooperative but appeared to have a positive attitude towards family planning. This probably shows that the lesser the exposure to family planning staff the more positive the attitude to family planning methods.

In another village, Kuri, we faced not just suspicion or doubt but outright hostility. As word of our presence in

the village got around signs of hostility became apparent, till at one point a certain section not only threatened to burn up our schedules, some of which were snatched away from one of our interviewers, but also get our team thrown out of the village, with the use of force. However, the Pradhan assured members of the team that no physical harm would come to any of us, but apart from this he was neither interested nor helpful. A stage was reached during the survey, when none of the wives were said to be in the age group of 15-25 or even 30 years - which was just a part of the organised resistance to the survey. However, with assistance from the Patwari, who was well known in the village, interviews were completed. It was easier in this village to interview amongst the lower castes who probably felt overwhelmed by the Patwari's presence. Interviews with Muslims in all the four villages were few. There was a general feeling amongst Hindus, that on the pretext of religious considerations, the Muslims did not accept family planning, and were therefore growing in number and would one day outnumber them.

During the course of this study we were based at the local Public Health Centre and observed its workings in detail. Its functioning leaves a lot to be desired and certainly confirms the villagers' opinions.

We also began to be disillusioned with the whole structured questionnaire and the quantified analysis approach to research. Tools developed in western conditions cannot be transplanted to Indian rural conditions. The replies which we got, when we did get them, were always highly subjective and often bore no resemblance to objective truth. There were great discrepancies between husbands' and wives' reports on matters of fact. When it came to opinions they often gave us the acceptable answer rather than what they believed. On matters relating to time they were uniformly vague.

In Patni, where the spectator response study was undertaken, we established ourselves gradually. We approached the village independently making it quite clear that we were not from any official agency. We also emphasised that we were not there to teach them anything, but to learn from them, particularly their reactions to moving images. During the long period between the preparation of the project design and its final acceptance we made several trips to the

villages, talking to people, and occasionally showing films of general interest. After approval of the project we stationed a husband and wife permanently in the field to interact with the villagers.

Initially there was a considerable amount of suspicion. Were we going to convert them to Christianity? Were we agents of the dreaded CIA or RAW? Were we going to deliver their women to a fate worse than death? And how does one counteract rumours? Through prolonged contact and continuous interactions these fears were slowly eroded.

We showed several feature films and general interest documentaries. The feature films screened included Prarthana, Jahan Pyar Mile, Teesri Kasam and Five Rifles. These shows increased our popularity and accustomed the community to seeing films and discussing them. It also gave us valuable insights into the film viewing situation and attitudes towards films.

Gradually we gained acceptance. We began to be invited to social events like marriages and soon made some good friends. We were consulted about day to day problems particularly those relating to the outside world. We took a keen interest in the local primary school, supplying them with visual aids. We took many photographs and gave copies away. However, we never took candid shots, but ensured that people knew they were being photographed and were agreeable. The use of video, reported later, finally gained us the trust and cooperation of the community.

Though the villagers were interested in seeing our films - problems arose when they were questioned about them - the whole concept of seeing films and then answering questions about them was a totally new experience for them. The women posed a special problem, particularly those of the higher castes who observed 'purdah' strictly. Some men and some mothers-in-law would not allow the women to attend film shows. Many did, without permission, but would deny being there if questioned. But by showing films in different areas practically everyone in the village saw some of the films.

Muslim women, particularly the Telis, were more hostile than others and often it took a lot of persuasion before they agreed to be interviewed. Often they refused and at times

left an interview midway. There were occasions when they were downright rude to the interviewer and at times women refused to have their voices taped. On the whole female interviews with women of the lower castes were easier to conduct, as they were more cooperative.

We came across stray incidents which reflects the orthodoxy of village life even today; for example, the desire to have a son is still very strong. We came across a Hindu woman who said she was beaten and illtreated by her husband for not having had any sons, and who accused her of having killed his sons. There was another case of a Jheemar woman who had been married for the last ten years and had had no children, her husband remarried and threatened to sell his first wife, who in turn came to us threatening suicide, if he sold her. One young boy was possessed by a malignant spirit and had to be exorcised at considerable cost.

On one occasion a group of young men came to us with leaflets. These stated, in very picturesque language, that the men in Vietnam had all died in the war, and Indians were being recruited, on payment of a registration fee, to breed with Vietnamese women. Very handsome salaries were being offered. Should they volunteer? And what reply should a family planning researcher give.

During the course of the field survey it was found that though the respondents believed in having fewer children, none of the existing methods were acceptable. Innumerable instances were reported of these methods having been used and found to have adverse effects. They also complained that medical services were far from satisfactory. Everyone had his favourite story where ineligible men, for example bachelors, widowers or fakirs had been vasectomised, at times under false promises, at others under duress, so that the workers could complete their targets.

The family planning staff was held in particularly low esteem. The villagers complained that there had been no ANM in Patni village for the past year even though there was a sub-centre. Even during the recent intensive drive conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Family Planning Department, not a single family planning worker reached Patni. The medical officers were accused of charging illegal payments for any medical aid. They said that medical aid was only for the rich farmers or

influential persons in the village; others were treated with casual interest. Such malpractices forced the villagers to go either to Saharanpur, to a private practitioner or even a quack rather than to the medical officers. And the private practitioners have been making a fortune administering the universal panacea - antibiotics.

Our relations with the family planning staff at the grass root level was ambiguous. Initially they felt that we would help them get cases. When we started talking to people, about their experiences regarding the family planning programme, and recording the replies, they began to get worried. We got requests to erase portions of the tape.

#### A NOTE ON VIDEO

The original intention, as is apparent from what has gone before, was to design a media strategy for family planning, and to evaluate family planning films, but our enlarged activities have covered a much wider area. A part of this scope was our brief experience with video in the field which suggests the possibility of a more constructive approach and seems to circumvent some of the problems encountered by the interviewers and field workers.

The nature of the film medium is such that it breeds passivity in the viewer. He sees images of other times and places but seldom relates them to his own condition. A shot of a starving child during the Bihar famine would not evoke sympathy, but laughter. A selection of documentary films is often viewed as one undifferentiated composite film. He enjoys feature films with their song and dance numbers but does not mind if the reels are jumbled up. The heavy weight technology required for even sixteen millimeter projection, with two ton generators, cumbersome cables, critically sensitive lamps and the requirement of darkness turns any film screening into a major 'tamasha'.

At varying times we managed to get loans of video equipment. This opened up exciting new possibilities. We have not had access to these tools for long enough to discover all their ramifications or to present definitive conclusions and limit ourselves here to general observations.

On our first trip with the video equipment we selected an

open space under a tree and set up our video Tape Recorder and monitor. We taped the people who gathered around and played it back simultaneously. This was a major event. Even sophisticated urbanites seem to be quite happy watching themselves endlessly. For our villagers it was almost magical. And it saved us from explanations. The medium was demystified.

One of the first tapes that was produced was a discussion with Harijan and Muslim landless labourers. Their basic problem was lack of land. Their minimum demand was for adequate living space. It was claimed that a substantial amount of common land did exist, but this had been encroached upon by the landowners with the connivance of the 'Patwari'. They felt that if the Consolidation Act was implemented, in the process of fixing boundaries, a lot of this common land could be released for distribution. They had sent several petitions in this connection but with no result. Their lack of trust in official assurance was apparent. Another issue raised was the absence of a uniform wage rate. Wages vary from time to time and from people to people and bear little resemblance to needs.

One of our friends, an elderly Muslim labourer, adopted the role of amateur and arranged to show the tape to some of the landowners and record their reactions. The landowners conceded the benefits of consolidation, but they did not trust the government machinery which would implement the Act. They cited examples from neighbouring villages where corrupt officials had made a packet while consolidating with no corresponding benefits to the community. But some landowners also felt giving land to the landless, would mean reduced productivity of the land. The common peasant would presumably go in for sporadic vegetable cultivation and mass production would be neglected. On the issue of wages they put forth the problems they faced in terms of the rising costs of inputs, lack of availability of fuel and power and low government procurement prices. Interestingly one of the cultivators offered to give some of his land to the landless if others would do the same. They would not. (Unfortunately at this point this particular piece of equipment and tape had to be returned to FAO.)

Our next video experiment was of longer duration. We arranged to have regular evening shows with taping being

done during the day. We also had some recorded tapes with us consisting of 'Chitrahaars' (a collection of songs and dances from commercial films), film clips and some tapes of a folk media festival. We varied the location of the shows but had huge enthusiastic crowds everywhere. It is quite a sight to see six hundred people watching a nine inch monitor. We also had few daylight shows for small groups, like women who would not come out from purdah. We discovered that locally produced programmes were among the most popular.

We allowed the community to dictate the content of the programmes. A few of the villagers soon began to make their own tapes. Many discovered they had hidden talents. Some sang and acted out film scenes, others preferred a more documentary approach, taping harvesting scenes, wrestling matches and other village activities, and some organised and recorded discussions. One team taped a film off the screen of a cinema hall in the neighbouring town. One discussion spontaneously turned to family planning. It was felt that planning one's family was a good thing in itself, and that this was a widely accepted view. However, services were felt to be totally inadequate and unreliable. They all cited examples of 'cases' which had gone 'bad'. The whole administrative approach of catching people by any means and 'sterilising' was responsible for the failure of the programme. They felt that if family planning workers met villagers regularly instead of going to the pradhan and saying 'get me ten cases or else', and services were improved, the family planning programme could become a success.

Our role was gradually narrowing down to storekeeper and underemployed technical consultants. The equipment took care of itself. No special precautions were taken. It was constantly exposed to dust, heat and back breaking bicycles rides. The monitor was run on a 12 volt car battery, that was no problem. However, we had to stay up many nights to tap the sporadic electricity support to charge the VTR batteries.

Our relations with the local establishments were ambiguous. In the village, the pradhan and other influential landlords felt threatened because unlike officials we did not work directly through them. At the same time they did not wish

to alienate us, being uncertain of the power we might have. They adopted a policy of passive non-cooperation. The obvious next step was to show these tapes to the concerned officials. The local officials were reluctant to be taped in the absence of clear directives from their superiors. Some of them even had the notion that we were permanently wired for image and sound and would not even talk to us frankly. The family planning people asked us not to show our tapes to their superiors.

One thing, however, has been established. Video does seem to be very effective in crystallising issues and opening communication channels within the community and between them and the outside world.

# CENDIT



Report of Phase I of the  
PROJECT IN FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION  
FOR RURAL YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES

Volume II: Family Planning Film Study



CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY



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Volume II: Family Planning Film Study

Director	Kishore Ray
Deputy Director	Rajesh Kumar
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 World Bank India Foundation Project  
 Uttar Pradesh Department of Family Planning  
 Staff in Saharanpur District and Lucknow  
 Directorate of Field Publicity and  
 Department of Family Planning of the  
 Government of India  
 and with the active support of  
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# I. A STUDY OF SPECTATOR RESPONSE TO FAMILY PLANNING FILMS.

## 1 THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

### OBJECTIVES

In the first phase it was decided to study the communication process with the available films on family planning made by both government and private producers.

Broadly, the purpose of the study was to find out how effective the film medium is in delivering a serious message such as a family planning message to a rural audience in a typical film exhibition situation.

The aim was not so much to study what was understood of a film message as to how and why it was understood. The main objective of the study was to determine what was the reaction of the spectators to certain films, relating them to certain broad criteria like the family planning message content, the argument for it, and the form and style of presentation; and to examine these in the light of credibility, comprehension and homophile; and to understand how this audience related to films.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- 1 to determine whether the family planning arguments in various films were perceived;
- 2 to determine the extent to which the family planning argument and the characters and the situations supporting that argument were found to be credible;
- 3 to find out which of the family planning arguments presented was the most credible;
- 4 to determine whether the manner and style of presentation was communicative and credible and which kind of presentation was most so;
- 5 to determine whether the difference or the similarity in the environment and in the life style of the characters presented in the film were perceived and whether that

affected the credibility of the film's message;

6 to examine what specific elements in the films caused the respondents to relate to the films;

7 to find out the extent to which the language used in the films was understood;

8 to find out what elements in the films were acceptable and those that were objectionable to the spectators.

The study was to be carried out not only with the help of interviews with individuals in the audience but also by our impressions of the audience as some of us sat with them during the film shows.

#### HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesised that:

1 There would be a gap between what was presented by the films and what was perceived by the spectators.

2 Different arguments for adoption of family planning would have different levels of acceptability.

3 Attitude towards family planning would determine the response to the entire film.

4 The style and form of presentation would have varying degrees of communicative value.

5 Credibility of the message and of the characters and situations presented in the films would affect the acceptability of the message.

6 Homophile would affect spectator response in terms of involvement and credibility of the argument.

7 Education, number of children and previous media exposure will determine the attitude of the spectator to the family planning films.

#### SELECTION OF FILMS

After a preview of 70 films, a selection of 20 films was made

after consultations with officials from the Directorate of Field Publicity, Department of Family Planning and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A further selection was made on the basis of the following criteria (1) films which were made within the last ten years, (2) films with Hindi dialogue or narration, and (3) films which were popular with the exhibition agencies in the project area or had been intended by the film producer for a rural audience, or recommended or favoured for rural showing by the Department of Family Planning and Directorate of Field Publicity. Films were chosen to represent different styles of filmmaking with common occurrence of thematic content. This led to a final selection of seven films in which various arguments for family planning such as economic reasons, reasons related to health and family welfare and also those related to national welfare, were presented. Two of these films, Teen Saal Baad and Teen Gharaney, had a dramatic structure with dialogues; Chor Chor and Years of Promise had narration; Chautha Palna used song and dance and Actual Experience had an interview approach. The last film Hands had an essay structure with no dialogue or commentary, but only music.

To overcome the audience preempting its own responses, two films Chor Chor and Hands, which had the message only at the end, were clipped and shown without the direct family planning message. This helped us to assess better the credibility of the film's argument itself and let the spectator suggest their own solutions to any problems presented in the films.

Synopses of the films and other relevant details are given in the following pages. The synopses are kept as objectively descriptive as possible.

## YEARS OF PROMISE

1967. Colour. 22 1/2 minutes. Atma Ram Films.  
Producer/Director: Atma Ram.

The film begins with women working in the fields. From the way the women are dressed the village would be located in Maharashtra. The narration is in Hindi and in the third person, and sometimes dubbed for incidental characters. The narrator says this is Sadapur village and it is prosperous and joyous. Shambhu is a prosperous villager who provides well for his family. Shambhu is walking through the village and goes to his home, where he lives with his wife Sita, his mother and his son Nikku.

Over the years, his family increases. He has six children. The children have their quarrels and demands. As Sita draws water from the well, the narrator says that she has become weak after bearing so many children. Shambhu goes to the moneylender who tells him first to clear his old debts. Sita also points out the lack of money for the household and the narrator asks what is to be done if there is no money for buying the necessities of life. One of the children's slate is broken and Shambhu refuses money for a new one. The child is asked to stand out of class as he does not have a slate. He runs to the field and catches a passing train to the city, crying. He is tracked down by a village elder and, on his return, he is beaten by his father in anger.

The village headman invites Shambhu to a meeting. At the meeting, the narrator says, normally the headman asks questions; this time he proceeds straightaway to discuss the problems of the village - that of not having enough land and money. He says that the government schemes have done many things, provided wells, seeds and fertilisers; but still there is no happiness in the village because there are too many people. Even if there is money, the population keeps increasing. The headman and Shambhu are seen talking after the meeting.

Next, they are seen together at a family planning exhibition. They see some family planning posters and a lady demonstrator is seen explaining with the help of a map of India and other posters. Then they go to another section where the contraceptive methods are displayed by models and charts. The sound of music attracts them to a puppet show.

There the puppet narrator sings that he has a message, - what will be the result of increasing population, things have become expensive, children are wasting away; illiteracy and conflict confuse the mind - Ramu Bhayya earns only for himself - and harassed by his many

children - he is warning others who are due to get married. He who is the father of two will be happy. It is not yet too late, if you practice family planning, I'll say again and again.

The headman and Shambhu are seen talking to a lady doctor. The commentary says that they are inviting her to their district. Then Shambhu is seen talking to his wife at night and we are told that despite his shyness, Sita understands his intention.

The doctor comes in a van to the village and is seen talking to some villagers collected together under a tree. The narrator says the doctor and her assistant suggest sterilization after having enough children. They are then seen addressing a group of women.

The family planning mobile van comes to the village and Shambhu and Sita, along with others, give their thumb impressions. The commentator says that vasectomy is performed only with the consent of both husband and wife. Shambhu goes inside, we see the operation room - the doctor says that there is nothing to fear, there won't be any pain. Shambhu, after some time, is seen walking out and the headman greets him and says he has set an example for his village and offers Sita some tea.

Back at the village, Shambhu and his wife are in their house. He takes his plough and goes out. Sita follows with the child. The narrator quotes a proverb that each man brings his luck with him but says that making your future bright is in your own hands.

CHOR CHOR

1968. Black and White. 12 minutes. Uttar Pradesh Government.  
Producer: Suresh Joshi. Director: Suresh Nigam.

The film begins with shots on the banks of the Ganga in Banaras. After a while, the Hindi narration in the first person says that a few miles from Banaras was the narrator's village, where he used to return for his holidays. He continues to recollect childhood memories of his village. Visuals show his old home, and then children playing in a village. The narrator talks of his two uncles and his cousins, Ratan by one uncle, and seven other cousins by the second uncle. Of how they used to play a game "Chor Chor" and how Ratan always lost. Then in actuality, the positions of the game were reversed. With the death of one uncle and the land division following abolition of Zamindari, Ratan is placed in an advantageous position, with a lot of land and the other seven brothers have one seventh each of the land they had. A train leaves. The narrator says the seven brothers left the village, baffled by the new conditions. Ratan, now a young man, is seen pacing the field. The narrator says that Ratan's father had brought him up, the only son, with a good education and he is now in a position, after independence, to better himself, which he does, using all the facilities available to him.

A plane takes off and a train comes in. In the compartment, the thread to the present is picked up as the narrator is shown as a middle aged man and words say that these are childhood memories; now, the cousins are meeting again in their village for a wedding.

As the film shows the ruins and remains of an old house, the narrator laments the fate of his seven cousins whose families are struggling to exist in the village, and the large house of Ratan on the other hand and his happy looking wife and children are shown in contrast. There are two children and the wife is dressed in a rich sari, worn in urban style. Over the faces of his seven cousins, he describes their plight in their menial jobs in the cities, and questions why this should happen to them who are as intelligent and strong as Ratan.

If this were the story of one family, the narrator says, he had no right to say anything. But seeing their plight it must be said that less children should be born, so that they may have all the things they are entitled to in this free country. Otherwise they will be lost in the increasing multitude of this country and this story of loss and defeat will continue. From

the brothers, the film shifts to a large moving crowd shot and ends with the family planning triangle.

NOTE: This film was shown clipped of its direct family planning message at the end of the film for reasons explained in the section "Selection of Films" in this chapter.

CHAUTHA PALNA

1969. Black and White. 10 minutes. Educational & Social Reform Films. Producer: BP Joshi. Director: Shanti Lal.

A middle aged woman, fairly modern looking and wearing a sari, in urban style, and her husband's younger sister, are at home with three children; one is a baby, the others between the age of six to eight years. The sister-in-law, dressed in salwar kameez, addresses a song to her bhabhi and dances around her. The song is in Hindi. The house is urban. Every now and then, the children are seen dancing the twist, and the sister-in-law alternates her attention between the children and their mother.

The song is sung teasingly and lightly. It says do not have the fourth child, Bhabhi, or else your family will be ruined. In three stanzas it tells the woman that her husband is very fond of her but as she is cleverer than him she should not get carried away but restrict the number of children; again, that there are so many people in the house already, that her beauty will be lost with having too many children, and that she should not have her garden filled with falling leaves. Every one will be happier if she has no more children.

Finally, the singing, dancing sister-in-law threatens to make things difficult if she is not taken notice of. One, or two, and three is enough, do not have 'Cheen' in your 'Angan'; do not have a fourth child.

The shot with two women is frozen, and a commentator says that the problem of a large family has been placed before the woman by her sister-in-law, but it is the problem of a whole nation.

From this sequence, the film shifts to a map of India. Groups of children and crowds of people are shown with numbers superimposed on them while the commentary says that in our country three children are born every 2 seconds. How will these children get food, shelter, clothing, education? General population statistics are given. Visuals of classroom rowdiness and young boys gambling on the streets or smoking, and crowds again, carry a commentary that one day the crowds will destroy everything - a tree consumed by locusts appears; this is followed by posters on family planning, which is pointed out as the solution.

Reverting to the story line, the older woman is seen going to a family planning clinic.

TEEN GHARANEY

1964. Black and White. 18 minutes. Producer: National Education and Information Films Limited. Director: KA Abbas.

The film is dramatised, with dialogue in Hindi. The locale for the first few shots before the girl's marriage could be a village but the body of the film is located in urban middle class dwellings. The dress of the girl also changes from the traditional Maharashtrian sari to the normal urban style, along with the locale.

The girl is about to be married. Her parents consult the astrologer who matches the couple's horoscopes and for a small extra fee predicts that they will have twelve children. The girl's parents are pleased. The marriage takes place. The newlyweds move into their new home and their education begins as they experience the dramatic contrast of the neighbouring families' life styles. The two fathers work in the same office, earn the same salaries. But one family seems very well off, lives a happy, peaceful life in a comfortable, well organised home, whereas the other home is poor, shabby, dirty, chaotic and extremely overcrowded. The first family has two children, the other has eight, and a ninth is on the way. In the small family the parents are able to share their children's activities and development, to guide and encourage their progress, while the other parents are perpetually harassed, unable to control their tempers or to look after their children properly.

Mala, the young bride, watches and listens and begins to worry. The mother of the small family tells her that the other family would have been far better off if only they had practised family planning. Mala wonders if this means that she should not have children at all. The other woman reassures her, saying that a woman is not a woman until she becomes a mother, but that the number of children is within our control, and she informs Mala of the family planning centre.

Mala and her husband visit the centre; they are sitting with a lady doctor or lady health worker. A voice over commentary then asks what is the true meaning of family planning and explains that it can bring happiness to their lives. The parent's first duty is to provide their children with health, education and shelter and consider their financial situation to support them. Various family planning posters are shown. The commentary says that the government has set up the clinics which advise various methods convenient to different people.

Back home the couple decides that they will have two children and

then stop. Just then the astrologer reappears, again blessing them with twelve children. But this time he is chased away.

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ACTUAL EXPERIENCE IV

1969. Black and White. 14 minutes. Film Division.  
Producer: Pramod Pati. Director: OP Arora.

A well-to-do family of parents and several children are being interviewed. The interviewer is off screen, and speaks in Hindi. He asks how many children they have - they have eight children surviving, four have died in the 22 years of their marriage.

Interspersed with titles are clips from three interview situations about the loop. The first woman speaks in Hindi, the second in Marathi and the third in Gujarati.

A middle class woman is seen with her two children, both girls - then going to work - it is a city scene. There is a voice over in English in first person which says - I am Suryakantam, I have two children, and belong to a middle class family. I also have to work and cannot afford more children. After my second child a friend advised the loop, and though my in-laws want a grandson, well, who can tell if the third will also not be a girl.

After this is shown a village woman apparently in Uttar Pradesh; she speaks in Hindi, and is a Muslim woman. She replies to introductory questions - her children's names, her husband's occupation and a description of the amount of room in her house. Both her talking as well as what she describes are shown. She doesn't want any more children either because of their financial hardship. She is using the loop, and says that now she has no trouble, she does a lot of work around the house everyday and this is shown in the film.

There are two short interviews in Hindi, with two women, shown in close-up. One says that her loop was expelled on its own after a few days, the other says that for two years she used the loop to prevent conception, then removed it and has not had one reinserted.

A lady doctor, facing the camera, speaks in Hindi, saying that she has inserted 1500 loops in the last two years and in 70 percent of the cases, there has been no trouble. Two or three menses occur prematurely and in some cases bleeding is excessive. But these troubles normally settle down on their own after some time.

Suryakantam appears again, a voice over in English says that initially she had bleeding for two weeks, after which there was no trouble at all.

A woman speaks in Hindi saying she had little trouble at insertion,

just a pricking feeling, and afterwards what trouble she had was set right with medicines and injections; now she is perfectly all right.

A woman in Punjabi dress, and speaking in Punjabi, says that she had the loop removed as she wanted a child, that there was no trouble at the time of removal and after one normal menses, she conceived. The delivery was normal and the child well.

Interviews in Gujarati, Marathi and English are followed by a long interview in English with a Mr and Mrs Mehra, living in Chandigarh, in a three bedroom house with two children. They talk of wishing to keep up their standards of living and that two is a good number for children. Mrs Mehra says she is happy with the loop after her initial problems with it.

In a short sequence, a woman, in close-up and apparently from Eastern Uttar Pradesh, talks of rumours-- she has heard of the loop, that many women say that there is trouble with the loop and illness after it.

The lady doctor is shown again. She says that normally there is no difficulty at the time of loop insertion. But for some people there is trouble later. They require to be reexamined and can be treated with medicines which are available free of cost in all family welfare clinics. There are also some women who have a lot of bleeding, in which case the loop has to be removed, but on reinsertion, they have no difficulty.

A burkha clad woman says she will never remove the loop even if she has cancer or dies as she wants to prevent further conception. Dr Jussawala of Bombay is shown speaking in English saying that they have examined thousands of women from all over India, and with the modern loop, they did not come across a single case of cancer.

An interview with an urban, but orthodox woman follows, where she says that it took two minutes to insert the loop, and then when she had trouble, she went to the doctor who said that her pain was only a misgiving.

The film ends with the title shot and a long row of new born babies in cradles.

HANDS

1970. Colour. 11 minutes. VS Enterprises. Producer/Director: Vimla

This is a film with no commentary or dialogue. It has only music over several images juxtaposed with each other. These images are generally of various hands, engaged in different situations, activities, gesture or motions.

The film begins with a baby, then its two hands, it is being fed by its mother; it moves on to hands writing on a slate, holding a book. Several shots of hands with books, in a library shelf and table and so on are followed by a finger pointing to a situations vacant column in a newspaper. A series of hands engaged in work are shown, typing, printing, in machine works of an industrial nature, hands sewing with a sewing machine, making up electrical assemblies, telephone operating and surgery. Shifting to rural environment there are hands engaged in ploughing, sowing, plucking of fruit, milking a cow, weaving, clay moulding. There are different kinds of musical instruments being played; drums being beaten, fingers stringing a tanpura, playing a sitar, a piano, tabla and painting different pictures. From a painting to a sea shore. Two hands holding each other, a boy and a girl are sitting on the beach, his hands write I love you on the sand, then the hands meet. A priest in robes is seen at a Christian marriage rings are being exchanged; the hands of Christ on the Cross are shown. Situations follow from a Nikah; hands of several men held up in prayer, a girl reading from a holy book. Then from a Hindu marriage a dholak is being played, mehndi being applied on the hands, tying of knots of the clothes of the bridal couple, and aarti.

The sequence shifts to her putting a glass of milk on a small table, hands pull her by her hands and then by her sari. Her hands struggle to put off the light switch. There is darkness. Leaves of a calender on the wall are torn month by month three times. Then a baby appears. A feeding bottle is prepared. Then the calender itself is changed; one after another two sets of clasped hands appear.

Hands are digging at broken, dry earth. A potter's wheel is lying with a broken earthen pot. A hand is beaten against a wall. A girl is leaning against the wall, and some hands on her shoulder suggest others relating to her.

Hands on barbed wires. Around a plate are hands stretched out; each gets one roti, torn up. A boy empties a small onion from a plate and takes it away. A boy is picking a garbage heap. A

beggar receives alms. A girl gets taken away after payment of money. There is pick pocketing and hands behind bars and in chains. A recapitulatory montage of shots follow, interspersed with a clock and infant babies. After the third repetition a hand points at the screen. Then several hands make a stopping gesture; there are several such shots of hands. The soundtrack reverberates with the word "stop", in Hindi and later in English.

Then two sets of clasped hands appear on either side of a red triangle. The pointing hand appears. Again the triangle appears and a man, his face turned away, extends his hands in a stopping gesture.

NOTE: This film was shown clipped of its direct family planning message at the end of the film for reasons explained in the section "Selection of Films" in this chapter.

#### SELECTION OF SAMPLE

Since the objective was to gain indepth understanding of the spectator response to the films, it was decided, in consultation with our field team who were living in a village adjoining our project village, that we have a small sample and use an extensive questionnaire so as to probe deeply and find out as much as possible, and get nearer the true reactions to the films. A broader sample would not have been possible to cover in such depth not only because of the available time but because of the audience itself. There was an already prevalent resistance to family planning and therefore we feared an unwillingness, as a community, to tolerate for too long, interviewing about such films. Besides, there was an impatience even on the part of those willing, and suspicion of our motives, born of not being able to really understand our purpose. Also the women were so unfamiliar with interview situations that we did not expect many respondents.

For these reasons, we decided to show two of the films in the adjoining village of Sultanpur as well, as Patni would get saturated with films on the same theme and we felt 5 films would be their limit.

The interviewing base was restricted to 10 people per film (5 males and 5 females) with an overall total of 70. Respondents were to be selected (1) by their presence at the show, (2) on the basis of the wife's age, and (3) on the basis of representativeness in terms of caste and religious grouping.

#### PREPARATION OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A questionnaire was worked out separately for each film, keeping in mind the specific objectives mentioned earlier. It was decided that an informal interview, seemingly unstructured, would be an adequate tool for data collection. The rationale for selecting this method was that a formal interview situation was unnatural in a rural Indian setting where villagers were unused to answering structured questionnaires.

Two interviewers (one male and one female) saw the films several times and studied the questionnaire for each film so that it was clearly understood. They also helped to

prepare some of the questionnaires which were then translated into Hindi, keeping in mind the local dialect of the region. The questionnaire was tested with the film Years of Promise.

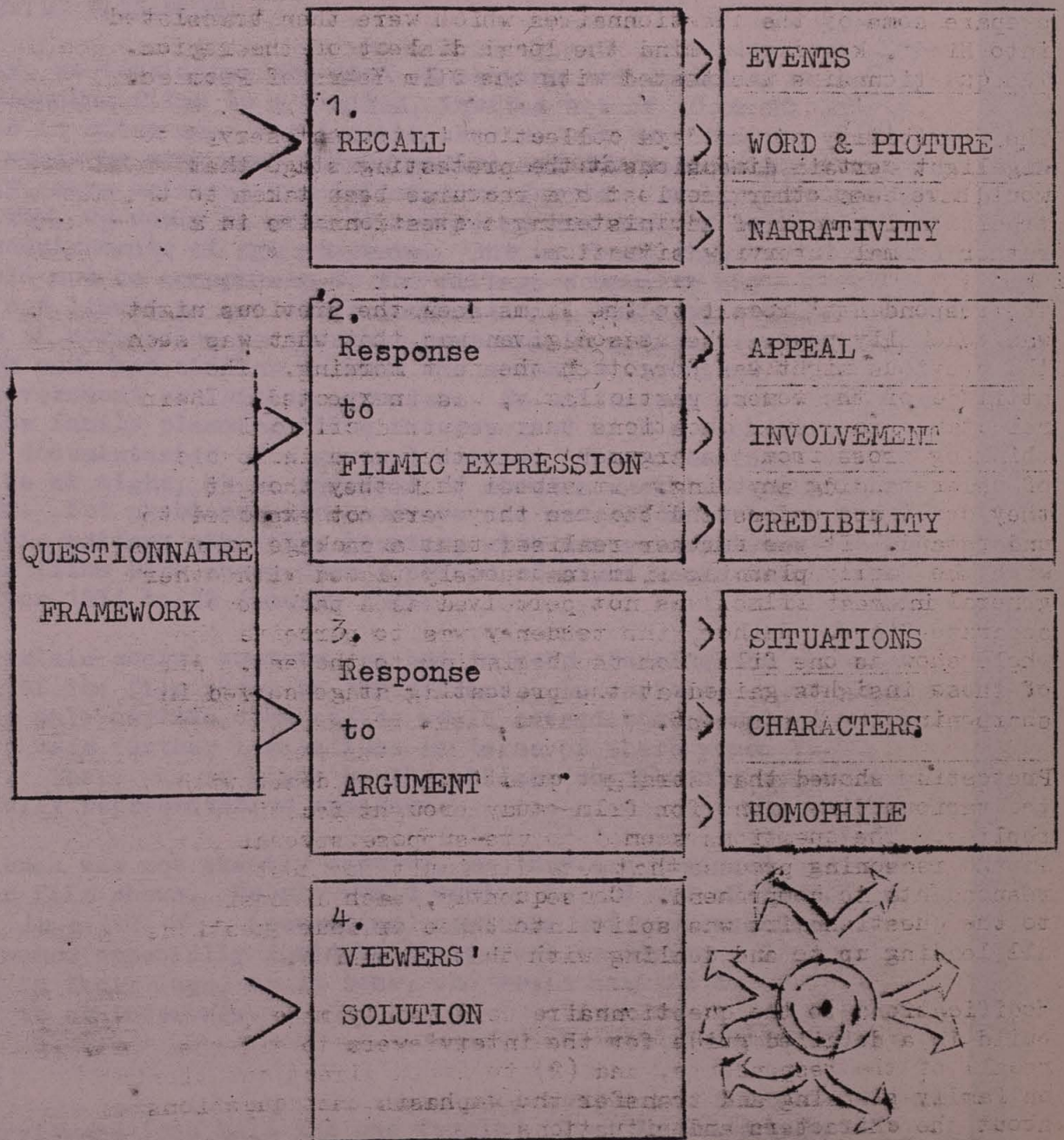
The flexibility of the data collection instrument served to highlight certain dimensions at the pretesting stage that would have been otherwise lost had recourse been taken to the traditional manner of administering a questionnaire in a rather formal interview situation.

The respondents' recall to the films seen the previous night was generally poor. The reason given was that what was seen the previous night was forgotten the next morning. The attitude of the women, particularly, was unexpected. Their reluctance to answer questions that required critical thinking arose from the argument that they were incapable of understanding anything. It seemed that they thought they could not understand because they were not expected to understand. It was further realised that a package of films, with the family planning film innocuously placed with other general interest films, was not perceived as a package of separate films. Rather, the tendency was to perceive the whole show as one film from the beginning to the end. All of these insights gained at the pretesting stage served in sharpening the instrument.

Pretesting showed that straight questions that dealt with the various dimensions for film study brought facetious replies. The questions seemed to pre-suppose several steps in the reasoning process that were difficult for most respondents to comprehend. Consequently, each dimension to the questionnaire was split into three or four questions, all leading up to and dealing with that dimension.

Modifications to the questionnaire were mainly made (1) to build in a detailed guide for the interviewers to aid the recall of the respondents, and (2) to avoid direct questioning on family planning and transfer the emphasis onto questions about the characters and situations.

A uniform data sheet was used for all interviews to gather information on religion, caste, education, number of children living, exposure to media both traditional and non traditional, attitude to documentary films, and knowledge and attitude towards family planning.



This diagram explains the common basis on which the questionnaire was worked out for each film.

## FILM VIEWING SITUATION

Initially, we considered the idea of showing individual family planning films to a limited, invited set of 10 or 20 people as is often done for indepth studies, so that the viewing would be with more concentration and the responses, hopefully, more critical and informative for us. Also, in this way, we would be able to ensure an audience of our sample requirements of age etcetera. But we found that this would not be acceptable to the village community and we were not likely to get their cooperation. Besides, it might be of more value to see what happened in a film viewing situation somewhat similar to what was normally organised by the government exhibition agencies. So ultimately we showed the family planning films interspersed with a package of other documentaries of a general nature. The screenings were to be at night, at an interval of about a week between each show. But problems with hardware did not allow us to follow this pattern strictly; however, with minor variations the seven films were shown over a period of eight weeks from 25 November 1974 to 22 January 1975.

Due to certain social customs, we had to keep changing the location of the film shows in the village. In certain locations only certain communities would attend the show, and there were further limitations in terms of where women would go. There was no place in the village which would draw a fully representative audience.

The audience was not exactly captive, as they are supposed to be for film shows. People would wander in and out of shows, indulge in a lot of (revealing) comments and conversation, and the women especially would be distracted by crying children in their laps, or at home, who would have to be attended to at intervals.

## APPROACH

The interviewers (one male and one female) lived in Sultanpur, where two of the films were shown, and cycled everyday to Patni, half an hour away. They began to live there about eight weeks before our film study screenings commenced. Some of the other members of the team made periodic visits. The interviewers generally made the acquaintance of people in the villages, and established rapport with them by

getting to know them on an informal basis. This helped the quality of our interviews: despite their confusion as to our intention, the respondents were willing to be more open and honest than they otherwise might have been.

As part of this effort towards establishing contacts with the village, several short films and some feature films were shown at periodic intervals for a few months before the film study commenced. This also helped to assess their general reactions to films. The approach was made entirely without official references as we did not want the apprehensions or inhibitions felt by the villagers to the officials to be reflected in their attitude towards us.

#### INTERVIEWING SITUATION

The interviewers went out the day after the film screening and the normal practice was to record all interviews on tape. Interviews were conducted in an informal situation and the respondents were most often unaware that their conversation was being taped. Interviews were taped so as to gauge the value of the reply by the tone, intensity and the general attitude of the respondent in answering questions. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes on tape. Interviewers generally worked alone, so that the respondents were not inhibited by too many outsiders. After listening to the interviews, the interviewers were rebriefed when necessary as to their method. Later, the interviews were transcribed and collated.

Some problems in the interviewing situation arose from the attitude of the respondents. Those hostile to family planning, put off by the film, would attack the interviewer, and not reveal their real response and reasons till after a lot of extraneous conversation. Those apprehensive of interviewers had to be drawn out. There would be several digressions. And in the case of women, these digressions would also mean the occasional participation of the interviewer in the household activities of the respondent in the course of the interview. The novelty of the situation was perhaps responsible for the acute embarrassment of some of the women respondents who would laugh and shy away, and with great perseverance and tact on the part of the interviewer would complete an interview.

But on the whole, interviews were fairly honest and in depth.

## PLAN OF ANALYSIS

The study called for a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis. The interview situation allowed the respondent to ramble and to digress in any manner he pleased. This was an advantage insofar as new and unexpected dimensions emerged in the perception patterns to films, actual feelings were revealed and deeper insights gained. It also allowed the respondent to be natural and less self-conscious. The interviewer was asked to operate within the structure of the questionnaire in the manner which best suited the situation. But as a consequence, aside from a mass of extraneous information, the sequencing of questions got altered. Further, the answer to a question often came not as an answer to that question but as an answer to some other question and new dimensions constantly emerged.

Given these facts, a fairly flexible plan for handling the data was worked out. Each interview was gone through carefully and the answers to questions were then sorted out. The overall attitude of the respondent, in terms of the manner in which the questions were answered, the tone, intensity of the voice, or laughter, or 'I don't know' or 'I don't remember' statements that accompanied the answers were all taken into account in assessing the quality of the answers. There were often contradictions in the answers given. In such cases, either answers were discarded or were reconciled, taking into account the entire interview. There were always two people working together on the analysis with the interviewers themselves participating frequently. In cases of doubt, a consensus of opinion was arrived at.

Each interview was examined under several categories - recall of the story of the film, credibility of the argument, form and style of presentation, homophile, media expectation and media credibility, and the expressed effect of the film on the respondent and his attitude to the specific family planning message of the film. The ten interviews for each film were then consolidated into a Film Response Profile, resulting in seven such Profiles. The data was then examined across all the seven films to see if there were any conclusive answers to the following:

- 1 What was the general reaction of the respondents to the medium itself;

- 2 Which form of presentation had more appeal;
- 3 Which family planning argument, if any, had more appeal or more credibility;
- 4 What was the family planning attitude that emerged in relation to the films;
- 5 Whether homophile was necessarily an important factor to reckon with for communication of a family planning message;
- 6 Whether factors such as education of the respondent, the number of children he/she had, or previous media exposure affected the respondent's perception of the film and his/her attitude towards it;
- 7 Whether there was any film that was liked best of all, and for what reasons.



## 2 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

In all, seven films were shown and interviews for the study were restricted to 10 per film (5 male and 5 female). The estimated sample was a total of 70 interviews (35 male and 35 female). The criteria for selection of respondents was (1) presence during the film show, and (2) the woman's age, and in the case of male respondents their wives' age, being 15-25 years. An attempt was made as far as possible to keep the sample representative of religion and caste. But certain peculiar viewing conditions imposed limitations on this. One of these was the site or location of the film show. It was found that location determined the audience for the show. Thus, if the site chosen is in a certain locality, only members of certain castes and religions would go there. So, we had to hold film shows in different places by turn, but that meant our sample for each film not only varied from film to film but could be representative only of those groups that would attend the show. Further, women were restricted by the distance from their homes. Young married women with no children were generally not allowed to attend a film show "in public" and if they came, their attendance and subsequent interviews had to be surreptitious. Therefore the number of women in this age group were limited. Also, it was not the custom for the husband and wife to attend the same show, therefore it was rarely possible to interview a couple for the same show.

The rate of refusal initially was high with a total of 52 refusals (21 men and 31 women). These respondents were, however, substituted by others who had been present during the film show. Interviews with 67 persons were successfully completed (33 male and 34 female). Three persons who refused could not be substituted due to non-availability of respondents.

Of the 67 respondents that were interviewed only 39 (23 men and 16 women) did so willingly, and the remaining 29 had to be persuaded by the interviewers.

A uniform data sheet was used to obtain certain background information about each respondent and their exposure to media, both traditional and nontraditional. This included literacy, marital status, number of children, religion, caste, exposure to radio, printed matter, films and traditional media.

LITERACY

An analysis of the data showed that 23 respondents (16 male and 7 female) were literate, that is they could read and write; 3 men could only read and 7 respondents (5 male and 2 female) could sign their names. 34 respondents (9 male and 25 female) were illiterate.

RELIGION AND CASTE

Of the 67 respondents 41 were Hindu (16 male and 25 female) and 26 were Muslims (17 male and 9 female). Amongst the Hindus there were 19 Harijans, 11 Sainis, 5 Brahmans, 3 Khatri, 2 Jheemar and 1 Badai. Amongst the Muslims the dominant castes were Gada (11) and Telis (12) with one Rajput, one Lohar and one Nai. The number of female respondents was higher among Hindus.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

All the respondents were married and 22 respondents (10 men and 12 women) had no children, 14 respondents (7 male and 7 female) had one child, 16 respondents (8 men and 8 women) had two children and 8 respondents (5 male and 3 female) had 3 children; 5 respondents (2 male and 3 female) had four children and only 2 respondents (one man and one woman) in our sample had 5 children.

MEDIA CONTACT

When questioned about exposure to radio only 13 respondents (9 men and 4 women) said that they listened to the radio frequently; 23 respondents (14 male and 9 female) said they listened sometimes, 16 respondents (8 male and 8 female) said that they rarely listened to the radio and 15 persons said that they had no contact with radio.

PRINTED MATTER

Respondents were asked whether they read books and magazines, or got them read out by somebody else, and it was found that 22 respondents (12 male and 10 female) had never read any books or magazines, nor did they have them read out by anybody. Only 4 respondents (3 male and 1 female) said that they read books and magazines frequently. 21 (14 men and 7

women) read or had books or magazines read out to them sometimes and 20 respondents said that they rarely read books and magazines or had them read out.

#### TRADITIONAL MEDIA

When asked whether they had ever seen any kind of traditional media in the form of puppet shows, "svaang", dramas, song and dance or any other kind of tanasha, 54 respondents (28 male and 26 female) had seen some or all of them at one time or other; 5 respondents (one male and 4 female) had never had contact with any form of traditional media and 8 respondents had to be discounted as this particular question was absent in the interview schedule for the first film shown.

#### CINEMA AND SHORT FILMS

All respondents were asked about their contact with cinema and 42 (26 male and 16 female) said they saw films; 43 (25 male and 18 female) had also seen short films of documentary and informational nature, 25 respondents (7 men and 18 women) had had no previous exposure to cinema and 24 (8 men and 16 women) had also never seen any short films. In both cases the men had had greater exposure.

#### FAMILY PLANNING KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

To find out their knowledge of and attitude to family planning prior to direct questioning on the film, all respondents were asked about their knowledge of and attitude to family planning. When asked what they understood by family planning the most common response was that it meant having fewer children; but they rarely mentioned any particular method of doing so. Similarly though they appeared to have a favourable attitude towards family planning in general, they were evasive about saying anything positive for themselves. In the sample of 67, only two persons admitted to be current users.

More specifically the response was as follows:

20 men as against 22 women respondents said that family planning meant having fewer children and three men as against eight women reported having no knowledge of family planning. Two men mentioned that it was something by which one could

space children though they did not mention any specific method of spacing, while one man mentioned vasectomy as a method, and one male respondent said that family planning meant having fewer children through 'medical interference', but did not mention a specific method, but added that it was to ensure family welfare. One male respondent casually remarked that it was something important, while one said that it was something to control the population, and one said that it was something good. One respondent said that it was for poor people who would benefit from it and two said that it was to do with children and one wrongly said that it meant to educate one's children and obviously he had no knowledge. One male respondent refused to answer the question. There was no refusal from the women. Of the 22 women who said family planning meant fewer children, none of them said how they could have fewer children. One of them said that having fewer children was good for health and one said that a small family was a happy family. Two female respondents mentioned vasectomy as a specific method to limit number of children and two women said that it was some way of limiting family size.

15 male respondents as against 20 females appeared to have a favourable attitude towards family planning often saying that with the high cost of present day living it was better to have fewer children or that if there are fewer children they can be brought up well, or that it was in the national interest. They were evasive about what they would do themselves. Only one male respondent positively said that he would be willing to adopt family planning for himself in the future, and two men admitted to being users, one of whom said that his wife had accepted the loop, while the other merely stated that he was a user. 11 men and 9 women had no attitude towards family planning either negative or positive. Two men were hostile towards family planning, one because he had no children and the other because he was against the manner in which the programme was being implemented. For example, he mentioned instances where men who were not eligible had been vasectomised, that is, they were widowers or bachelors or too old, and felt that the programme should be directed towards younger couples with two or three children.

Similarly for the women, 20 of them, though they appeared favourable in general, did not say anything about themselves. They did mention that having too many children can create

problems as these days people cannot afford too many children, four women seemed positively favourable, saying that they did not want more children but they were non users and made no mention of adopting family planning in the future. However, one of them said that she would not undergo sterilisation as she had only two daughters. One woman was favourable but fatalistic, saying that though she did not want more children, it depended on god's will, if he gave her more she would have no choice.

It would seem that though they have a favourable attitude in general they are not prepared to become users themselves, either because of lack of knowledge, and consequent misconceptions about family planning, or because they do not trust any of the methods propagated by the national programme. Lack of adequate supplies and absence of adequate follow up of sterilisation and loop insertion cases also justify their fears and prevent them from accepting family planning. To some extent social disapproval is also responsible for their negative thinking.

#### ATTITUDE TO FILM

It was also intended that we study the respondents' attitude towards film as a medium, specifically towards short films. We found that in all 41 respondents had had exposure to short films, of whom 3 said (1 male and 2 female) that they did not like them, the male respondent because he found them irrelevant and useless, and the women because they had no song and dance sequences. Of the remaining 37, most of them, men and women, liked these films for the information value. Farmers and their wives said about these films that they liked them because they were of instructional and informational value, and they found them relevant. A few also said that they found them entertaining. However, for some women they were just a diversion from their routine life and they liked these films only because they could see moving images. 9 persons (5 men and 4 women) were unable to give any specific reason as to why they liked the films. 8 men as against 12 women said that they had never seen short films and 3 men and 5 women did not answer the question.

### 3 FINDINGS

#### FILMS HAVE LITTLE EFFECT

The effect of the films evaluated in this study appeared to be negligible. There was very little serious response in terms of its emotional effect, the conviction of the argument, comprehension of the message or involvement with the film, its characters, situations and environments. Consequently, any attempt to relate the film's message to oneself was lacking most of the time.

Though there were questions which were meant to find out what the respondent's own action regarding birth control would be, all the responses cannot be taken seriously, as many of the answers were casually given. The responses seemed not so much a resolve to definite action of any kind but a half earnest, and perhaps lazy, agreement with the message of the film.

This is, however, not a reflection on the dishonesty of the interviewees. Most of the time, despite embarrassment for the women or low involvement on the part of the men, answers to the interviewer were on the whole honest. What is questionable is the depth of this answer; how momentary is the reaction under the influence of the interviewing situation? Or was it deeper or did it express a conviction or attitude that would influence the individual's later actions? Therefore it was useful to study the respondent's overall reaction to the film to assess its effect.

#### WHICH ARGUMENT IS VALID FOR FAMILY PLANNING ADOPTION?

Of the various arguments that were used in the films, the one relating to the well being of the children definitely stood out as being the most credible and having the most appeal. Out of the many arguments in Years of Promise, this particular one was pointed out and remembered; it was reiterated in the response to Teen Saal Baad and to Teen Gharaney. Moreover, this argument had a common appeal for both men and women. In every film in which this argument was put forward, it found agreement, though other arguments presented in the same film were often rejected. This conclusion takes into account the variables of the

communicative value of different films, as well as the comprehension level of the respondents.

Besides this, the importance of education seems considerable to the men, who are also more concerned with the economic problems, whether regarding the children or land and resources. This was evident from the men's reaction to the problem of land division posed in Chor Chor.

For the women, on the other hand, the mother's health is an important argument and sometimes as credible an argument as the care of the children, and the economic and personal capacity to look after them. For the men, this argument is not very credible; they either ignore it, are indifferent to it and uninvolved, or cite instances of women who have borne many children and yet both mother and children are healthy.

There was not much of an exposure to the argument of family planning for the national good, but nevertheless, there is reason to believe that if presented as an economic problem that will affect the individual, it will be credible to some of the men who think that far. But presented in terms of population increase, employment queues or in terms of one's "duty to the nation" it is not likely to find favour. We have no indication of what the women feel on the subject, but their incapacity to think even beyond the family unit suggests that they will not relate to the nation.

It was observed that wherever a large family was depicted and was the main point of emphasis, as in Years of Promise and Teen Saal Baad, the respondent's expression of willingness to adopt family planning was accompanied by remarks like, "I don't have so many children," "I have only two children so I don't have to think about it now." This could be an evasive attitude but the fact that it occurred in response to these two films also indicates an inability to identify with a family size different from one's own and also to project so far ahead. An interesting exception was the brief, but intensely dramatic depiction of a large family, as perceived by the wife (in the young couple who were built up as a strong focal point in the film.) They provided an immediate identification for our respondents who were drawn from a similar age group.

Presenting general arguments, that is, an omnibus of

Another strongly expressed feeling, again by the men, was the manner in which the programme was being currently implemented. One respondent, while expressing faith in the doctor in Teen Saal Baad said he would himself never go to a hospital, as nothing was possible there without bribery, which he could not afford, and he knew that without doing so, medical attention would be inadequate, whether it be for vasectomy or any other operation, and he would suffer later. There was also the feeling that workers, and even doctors, were target-oriented, and in their effort to collect cases, were unscrupulous in their advice and their assurances. These were some of the responses we got when we tried to examine the credibility of sources, characters in the film, characters through whom the message was delivered, like the doctor in Teen Saal Baad and the village headman in Years of Promise.

Of the specific birth control methods, only sterilisation, with emphasis on vasectomy, and the loop, were mentioned in the films shown. There is hostility to vasectomy, but more because of the way it is implemented by the family planning and medical staff. In fact, some of the respondents preferred to have children 'in rapid succession' and then adopt the terminal method. On the other hand, in principle, the loop found favour among many, because it was a spacing method, and was reversible - if necessary, it would be removed and one could have children again. This was appreciated by male and female respondents. But in practice, both methods were opposed due to fear of ill health. This fear was not found to be a preconception on the part of the respondents but based on the bad experience of neighbours, friends or relatives. And often the women said - there must be other methods of spacing, other than the loop, which we can use.

These feelings indicate that general arguments do not achieve much as most of the people in this age group at least, have nothing, in principle, against family planning. Again, many respondents said of some of the films - they do not say anything new. This "newness" relates to message content definitely, but also to a way of putting across messages that relate with meaning to the individual. This has to do with their perception patterns which will be discussed later in this report.

But specific issues are much more difficult for non-personal media to tackle and would mean relating to a deeper as well as wider level, and touching on issues which do not seem

obviously connected with family planning. There are certain problems presented in these films to which family planning is presented as a solution. But the natural tendency on the part of the respondents is, even if they perceive some of these problems as real, to seek social or legal remedies to them first, and limiting family size plays an incidental role in the solution of this problem. This is why, also, the perceptions of the problems in the film are not linked by the respondents to family planning as an answer, as the films would have them believe. Chor Chor was the only film that did not attempt this, though it provided no other solution. Teen Saal Baad, on the other hand, somehow conveyed a direct relationship between its problem and solution, though the solution might have found disfavour due to practical and empirical reasons.

#### PERCEPTION PATTERNS

Yet the argument in Teen Saal Baad was nothing "new". Something in its communicative quality gave its message the effect that a new realisation does. This brings us to some notes on the perception patterns of this audience to films. The overall impression of the lack of the effect of the films have been to some extent explained by the respondents' reactions to their message content. Now an examination of their perception will not only further clarify this but also help to assess the value of the film medium itself for delivering specific messages to this audience. Perceptions were studied, keeping in mind that the subject of these films might have influenced the perception itself. Considered along with this will be the field observations made by us while watching the films along with the audience.

#### RECALL

There was a fairly high incidence of confusion between one film and another where films were shown in a package of four or five. Apart from the fact that this is the normal rural exhibition pattern, unlike the urban audience, the village people often thought that all the films in the show was one film. Therefore, there was obviously a confused perception of the interrelationship of messages and purposes in the films. It also indicates a lack of familiarity with the film medium and an inability to decipher its manners. In many cases it reflects on a lack of attention and assimilation while viewing the films.

More than half the number of women and some of the men had another problem. "I saw it last night, I do not remember anything now", was a common enough response from them. The women had a further problem in that they did not expect themselves to understand or remember anything - "what can I say, I am uneducated". Embarrassment at just being asked to concentrate on something like a film, and then to have opinions about it did not seem to fit in with their expectations of themselves, and presumably of others' expectations of them.

#### EXPECTATION OF THE FILM MEDIUM

Expectation of this medium was also an important factor which conditioned the attitude to the films in general, apart from the specific message contained in them. The women seemed to be invariably looking for "song and dance" and "films like they have in the city". So their receptivity to a message film was conditioned by an automatic shut-off to most of the films. The alternate diversion was to merely watch the "moving pictures" as many of them admitted to doing, and to ignore the sound altogether. It was almost as though we sit in a moving train and watch the moving images go by the window, paying very little attention or giving little thought to what they are, so it hardly matters what the images are. As long as they divert the mind for a while and the novelty of the situation holds the attention to the "moving, walking, images".

Only when the spoken words were so integrated with the pictures, and there was no other diversion, were they attended to. We will come back to this later while comparing the response to different forms of presentation.

The men were not so keen on the "song and dance" entertainment, but on the other hand, they were keen on information. Their expressed attitude to short films was that they liked to see films on agriculture, because these films gave them information on new agricultural methods. Though many of them brought a serious attitude to our films, they expressed their disappointment that the films said nothing new, perhaps meaning also that there was no relationship between the film's content and their own needs. They had little value for them.

### CREDIBILITY OF THE MEDIUM

There was also a fair degree of cynicism about these films, in general their credibility was low. One man said "these films have nothing in them, we see them to pass time". Many said that films are made so that their producers can earn money and there is nothing true about them, films cannot be truthful, that they were for propaganda, and they are in any case acted out for the benefit of the audience, and only pretend to be real. Even when the interview situations were presented in the film Actual Experience some of the men said they were artificial and staged for the benefit of the film.

The women had a stronger reaction. To Years of Promise, most of them reacted by saying that the film did not have an effect on them, and could not because all the characters were "nakli". The people shown were not real, they were on a film screen. Nevertheless, this was not the reaction to all the films. For instance, responses to Actual Experience indicated that the women did not understand the intended "actuality" of the interview situation, as they thought everything was actual anyway, all films. Their credibility depended more on the form of presentation used. And to some films they responded that of course the people are actual, otherwise their pictures could not have been taken. The "story" or "drama" concept did not come into play. These two extremes of reaction suggest that whereas the men could make allowances for an abstraction of an idea that uses people and plot to represent reality, to the women, film was either real or unreal. This affected their capacity to accept messages at an abstracted level. On the other hand, when involvement was achieved, it was quite complete.

### WORDS

Moving from attitudes towards films in general to the various comparative aspects in different forms of presentation, an outstanding observation was made about the use of commentary as compared to an acted film with characters speaking their dialogue. Firstly, comprehension and recall is much higher for the latter type of films. A disembodied voice like the commentary/narration does not hold much attention. This is much more true of the women than the men, who do not completely miss the commentary but definitely, their recall is also higher for the dialogue film. This was noticed not only for entire films, comparing Teen Saal Baad and Teen

Gharaney, to the non-dialogue films like Chor Chor, and Years of Promise, but also for film segments. For instance a film like Teen Gharaney has dialogue for most parts, but uses a voice-over in the last sequence. This has uniformly low recall compared to the rest of the film. But comparing the "sung dialogue" as in Chautha Palna to the commentary in the second part of the same film, it is noticed that though the song is enjoyed, its content does not get across at all, and comparatively, the commentary draws higher recall.

The dialogue films are also the ones that are more credible for the women. There was often the remark about the films with commentary, "Are the people dumb that they cannot themselves speak".

Though an effort was made to find out if the language used in the film was comprehensible, there were too many contradictions in the responses to assess this. And there were too many other variable factors that could have been responsible for comprehension or lack of it.

#### AND PICTURES VIEWING IN SEQUENCE

The women were prone to watch pictures and ignore sound, while the men did pay attention to the spoken word. However, what was remembered better and comprehended better were films or even portions of films, which had a strong visual support, and preferably a well-knit set of visuals with a narrative structure. In Teen Saal Baad, this was borne out, and the women, whose recall and comprehension was normally poorer than that of the men, in this case was better in parts. A sequence in which words are not employed at all, but where there were tightly knit shots representing a mental process and emotions of the central characters, was well perceived by the women. In Years of Promise, which had commentary, only one event, portrayed in a sustained and fairly long sequence, of a little boy running away from home, was uniformly remembered. Similarly in Chor Chor, and Actual Experience, a semblance of sequential, narrative structure sustained for some length, had a better recall and comprehension than the rest of the film. Most of the time, except for Teen Saal Baad and Teen Gharaney the respondents could recount the events of the film sequentially.

The length of the event portrayed also turned out to be an

important factor. A fast pace did not register so well. On the other hand, segments with a dramatic quality, even if they were short in length, were remembered! for instance, the drama of the boy running away in Years of Promise, the water-pitcher breaking in Teen Saal Baad, where Razia is about to fetch water for a woman in labour pain, or a very brief shot of a burkha-clad women in Actual Experience, who dramatically says that even if she gets cancer, she will continue to use the loop for birth control.

#### FILM LITERACY

Women, without a strong support from dialogue, would view the film in fragments and not link up sequences. There would be one shot somewhere in the film, a small sequence, and another later, but on their own, the women would not link them up to derive an overall 'story' or message. This was most apparent in Hands, where the overall recall and comprehension for both men and women was almost nil. The film had no spoken word (commentary or dialogue) and no apparent narrative or sequential construction of shots. Despite this, some of the men showed some attempt at not watching the film as fragments and trying to comprehend an overall message. Though the message was misinterpreted by many, yet the men showed a capacity for visual literacy. They tried to link up images to make a message unit, they recognised the denotation of stereotypes in shots and symbols. This was apparent, though in a negative way, in the reaction to the last sequence of Teen Saal Baad, where Razia has a flash forward of having a baby. The women took it literally, in actual time: Razia had a child. The men were confused, they perceived that it was not actual time but then what was it, why is she with a child in one shot, and suddenly she is walking with her husband, in the present time, without the child.

#### FAMILIAR EVENTS

Another factor is familiarity. Familiar events were remembered more easily, like a vasectomy van, rural farming shots in Hands. Besides, when something was unclear, the respondents would tend to interpret from their own experience or knowledge and hence we had this phenomena of information assimilated, which information was not in the film at all. The river in Chor Chor was in Hardwar, according to the respondents. The narrator said Banaras. The boys were

stepbrothers - the narrator said they were cousins. In these cases, the details given in the narration were overlooked. In Actual Experience, according to the respondent, illness after using the loop is supposed to be caused by uncleanliness, loop is advocated for those who are afraid of vasectomy, a large family means more work for the mother. All this information is extraneous to film content but related to the respondents' own feelings and experiences.

Familiarity of events also makes for credibility and involvement. In Chor Chor, where presentation of the film caused a fair amount of confusion and loss of credibility, the event of Batwara compensated for this. It involved the men and made the problem real and gave the film a basis for credibility which its form did not achieve. Similarly, in Years of Promise, though the rest of the film was not assimilated well, nor evoked much emotion, the incident of the vasectomy operation provoked much comment, mostly hostile. So did the mention of consent of husband and wife to the operation, as this related to the contrary situation operating in the area.

#### WHAT CAUSED INVOLVEMENT? - FILM FORM AND ATTITUDE

What else caused any kind of involvement or relationship with the film, apart from acceptability or otherwise of the message? Good comprehension did, of course, but this in turn was also affected by the degree of involvement and consequent attention. A comparative study of the film responses shows that involvement was highest for both men and women in Teen Saal Baad and lowest in Hands and Chautha Palna, with Teen Gharaney and Chor Chor ranking second, while Actual Experience and Years of Promise were more towards the lower scale. Comprehension and form and familiarity of events account for some of this. Hands, Years of Promise, Actual Experience and Chor Chor used a less communicative form from the audience's point of view. Actual Experience suffered from an incomprehensibility of style, pace and varying languages. Chor Chor had the advantage of using a credible event, evoking sympathy.

Chautha Palna and Teen Gharaney used an acceptable form. But the reaction was found to be casual though diverting. Though song and dance was acceptable for its entertainment value, the content of the song did not get across, and

people's attitude to it remained at a casual and entertained level. Similarly, though Teen Gharaney was liked, and better perceived than Chautha Palna, yet the respondents' attitude to it was not as involved or serious as it was to Teen Saal Baad. This perhaps corresponds to the attitude of the film itself. Teen Gharaney was humourous, employed caricature, did not project its characters very intensely and its subject was of a general nature.

To Teen Saal Baad, however, answers were definite, serious, and spontaneous, if not always in agreement with the film's arguments. The attitude of this film was one of seriousness and was sustained throughout. Just as in Chor Chor, the narrator's nostalgic attitude was sustained throughout. This did affect those who managed to comprehend the film as they recalled the sentimental parts of the narrative, but not the informational details. Apart from its serious attitude, Teen Saal Baad also had a sustained emotional undertone, in the relationship between Razia and her husband, (the young couple who were the central characters) in their joy, in her fear of the older woman's labour pain and sorrow on the tragedy of her stillborn child, the husband's sympathy for Razia, or the interplay of emotions between the doctor and the various characters she comes in contact with. There is also high drama in this film, in the pain of the woman in labour, in Razia's desperate search for water for her and the strong impression of the screaming, and angered children who obstruct this process. The characters are projected in a well-defined and rounded manner, not sketchily or in caricature as in the other films. In general, a concentration and emphasis on human beings and human elements instead of objects seemed to cause a greater sense of involvement.

Appeal of individual characters was also a point to relate to. Razia and her husband were positively liked by most of the respondents and the women responded quite rapturously to them. The women were attracted to romance and romantic incidents. Also, they were more involved when the film had a well projected female character as the central character, as in Teen Saal Baad and Teen Gharaney. The men's involvement was a little less than that of the women, but increase of involvement when a female character was central to the film was considerable in the case of the women.

Also the identification was better achieved when the main

characters in the film were nearer the age group of the respondents and had fewer children.

#### HOMOPHILE

This brings us to credibility of the life style of characters, their appearance and their environment and that of objects in the film - the problem of homophile. A very clear picture does not emerge as to (a) if these factors are always perceived, and (b) if they make a difference to the effect of the film. From the overall impression, it seems that if the film provoked sufficient involvement, or when the visuals were somewhat familiar and not toally strange, as in Chor Chor or Teen Saal Baad, then factors of homophile were noticed. This included the status of characters, "they were better off than we are," whether they were or not. Even the behaviour of characters was noticed - and the freedom of behaviour between the couple in Teen Saal Baad was unusual, and even objectionable to some, while appealing to others, especially the women. Others also remarked on Razia wearing a burkha; which was not worn by women in their village, and her not having any work to do at her home. This was accompanied by the respondent's remark that he did not know how nuclear families lived, "how people live who live alone". On the other hand, all these remarks were made by men, who were less involved by Teen Saal Baad than the women. So when involvement was very high and caused by other factors, then again factors of homophile did not seem to be perceived. The men were critical when involved, but the women were emotionally involved, and seemed to overlook other things.

Even when differences were perceived, in some cases they seemed to affect the response to the film and in some cases not. In Years of Promise, though people identified the characters and the environment as of a village like theirs, it seemed to make no difference to their lukewarm response to the film. Whereas, in Chor Chor, though the environment was perceived to be similar but not the characters, male involvement was still high, but it seemed that identification with characters would have improved it. When there was an overall involvement, the differences made an impact and a better homophile could have increased the response to the film. A closer identification did seem to be a felt need for effect, provided basically the film evoked anything at all. Interesting responses came to Actual Experience where it was thought that presenting actual people from so

many different regions will increase credibility. But lack of identification with so many dissimilar people had the opposite effect. The people in the film were too distant for involvement. On the other hand, both Chautha Palna and Teen Gharaney had urban environments and people. Respondents identified themselves with families in Teen Gharaney but not with the family in Chautha Palna.

#### DEVELOPING MORE ADEQUATE RESEARCH TOOLS FOR FILM STUDY

However, the question of homophile needs further examination, as does the perception of individual images and their signification, and the stylistic differences in films and their effect and the interrelationship between these variables of film language. Tools of film analysis and research need to be developed for such work, and to relate these findings to explanations regarding the making of the film. In this context, our initial study of film semiotics becomes important. Its findings, purpose and relevance are discussed later in this report.

#### OVERVIEW

Having discussed the details of film perception, it is important to return to an overview of field observations. From a study of the characteristics of the sample, and relating them to their responses, there does not seem to be any basis to positively or negatively correlate film perceptions and attitudes to religion, caste, age, media exposure, education or number of children. But sex and expectation of media makes a difference and the difference in responses has been presented above. Education could make a difference to recall, but not to attitude to the film's message. However, one point of comparison was the respondents' general attitude to family planning and his response to the film. Most of the time, the response in intensity corresponded to his prior attitude to family planning. In Chautha Palna, there was less response after seeing the film compared to the respondent's general attitude. To Teen Saal Baad, there was more response, in the sense that the respondents were clearer and more emphatic than when they expressed their general attitude to family planning.

This suggests that the films had little effect, leading us back to the original conclusion. This is despite the fact

that more than half the respondents (male and female) had a favourable attitude to family planning in principle and also liked short films, on agriculture, for their information value, and a few of them, for diversion. It would seem that these films had no value, for this community in terms of information and subject to matter.

However, there are two factors that have nothing to do with specific films or the potential of the film medium that could be responsible for this. One is the passivity of the film viewing situation. There is a screen and there is an audience and there is a passive physical relationship between them. In this condition, much more is required of a film for it to cause involvement. Compared to a participatory process like community video, film becomes ineffective. Then certain other things become accentuated, like being able to identify with, relate to, and believe in, the images of the film. Much more care is required in these aspects than for video, where the audience comes to participate in the process of image making, thereby increasing involvement, credibility and identification, all three in turn making for relating better to the end product. One perceptive remark made by a respondent was "those are other people's problems on the screen, why not talk to us about ourselves". This speaks for itself. There is a feeling of distance with films which may be good for entertainment, escapism and diversion, but must be overcome for the purposes of delivering a serious message.

Secondly, the context of the film show is undefined and has no relationship to the context of life. The rural audience is not conditioned to film as an input to the informational or motivational environment around them. The film show does not fit into any of the larger contexts of life - of school, of religion, of customary occasions, festivals or group events, nor does it have a generated context-the support of necessary facilities, services and goods which the films direct the audiences towards. On the other hand, the films do not satisfy the information seeking need of a section of the audience. Neither do they relate to the current feeling about the family planning programme, or dispel fears and rumours, and impart corrective information in a sustained way in an acceptable and credible form.

Family planning is acceptable only along with other remedies, social, legal and economic. This emerges from the respondents' reactions to family planning as a solution to various problems. Therefore, unless media relates itself to these wider problems which, however, influence the adoption of family planning, they will remain ineffective. The approach to wider problems cannot be a one way process of discourse, but must rather generate discussion.

A casual attitude to watching films, arising perhaps from its newness as a serious input into their motivational environment, and from their unfamiliarity with film idiom, makes it difficult for this audience to respond seriously to films. This is reinforced by the expectation of media already created by the commercial feature film, as one of escapist entertainment.

However, the potential of film as such is not without worth. Even the films used in this study evoked response patterns that reflected on the varying nature of the films, and their competence to influence our spectators. A film, simply constructed, emotionally involving, with well projected characters, can make an impact.

A study and consideration of perception patterns will lead to film styles suitable for this audience. Further research is necessary in this area. Even more important is a study and consideration of the milieu of a specific audience. The film should be related to their particular needs and appeal.

However, the present limitations of film as a communication tool for this particular audience suggest a search for alternative media which should be able to evoke immediacy and participation, and film can function as a supportive system of communication.

#### INDIVIDUAL FILMS AND RESPONSES

We shall conclude these findings of the field survey with a brief comparison of the response to individual films.

Hands had the lowest response in terms of comprehension, recall, involvement and credibility and there was little question of agreement with the message of the film as it was not perceived, for the most part. Response patterns were fragmented, and there was an expression of confusion, futility and a strongly

expressed need for words to explain what the film was about. (The film had a nonnarrative, nonsequential structure and had no dialogue or commentary, but only music). The reaction was more or less common for men and women.

CHAUTHA PALNA used song and dance to deliver its message, telling most of the story, with a little commentary section in the later half. Despite the expressed wish of the respondents for song and dance and entertainment, the film did not convey its message, nor did it evoke much involvement. The reaction was more or less common for men and women and was casual.

YEARS OF PROMISE evoked little involvement, except hostility from the men towards vasectomy and a fair degree of comprehension of the argument. The women perceived little except the vasectomy incident and reacted unfavourably to it. The rest of the film was found fairly acceptable.

CHOR CHOR was not understood by the women, except in parts, and they remained uninvolved and were not much affected. The credibility of the form was low for men and women in that they found the people not as they were in real life. Nevertheless, the men showed a deep involvement in the episode of the land division, which was also very credible to them, and reacted well to the sentimental nature of the commentary. These factors helped them relate well to the film and they found the trend of the film's argument compatible with their own thinking. Even landless men were quite involved with this story of landed people, whereas all the women showed a fairly low involvement with the land division which was a central theme of the film.

ACTUAL EXPERIENCE was not very comprehensible due to its use of several languages, and the briefness of the interviews presented in the film, so that they needed to be continuously on the alert for changes of scene, etc. Besides, the interview situation did not increase credibility for either men or women, nor dispel fears about the loop, especially for the women, though the men claimed to have been impressed by the frank discussions and by the favourable experience of the majority of the women in the film with the loop. They also claimed to have gained some information about the loop from the film. Nevertheless, the overall attitude of the respondents was not one of conviction, and credibility was further decreased by the incapacity to identify with so

many different regions.

TEEN GHARANEY was well comprehended and well recalled. It was also much appreciated for its entertainment through humour, through which the respondents did perceive the actual message. There were also appealing characters and incidents; the astrologer and his predicament and his relationship with other characters appealed to the men, and the young couple and the wise yet common place advice of the mother of the small family appealed to the women. There was general agreement with the message of the film, even though it was not acceptable that a large family is always unhappy as the film tried to imply. However, despite these favourable reactions, the ultimate attitude to the film was casual and superficial.

TEEN SAAL BAAD elicited favourable reactions similar to that of Teen Gharaney. Its form was acceptable, the film was well comprehended and recalled; the central characters were appreciated by most of the men, and very much liked by all the women, and the doctor was generally credible. All the arguments of the film were credible to the women and most of them to the men. The suggested method for birth control found partial favour, in the sense that spacing was agreed with, and the loop subject to its effect on health, wife's opinion and the availability of a competent doctor. Besides this, there was a high degree of involvement with the film and a serious and definite attitude to the film and the interview on the film. The women were more involved in this film than the men, presumably due to the strong projection of a female character as the central figure in the film. But the factor of homophily was not positive for the men and they kept pointing out differences in dress, life style, language and behaviour of the Muslim couple. Unfortunately, most of the male respondents were Muslim, while most of the female respondents were Hindu, so it was not possible to check comparative responses, taking religion into account, between the male and female response patterns.

#### 4 FILM RESPONSE PROFILES

The following seven Film Response Profiles describe the response of a separate group of eight to ten interviewees to each film. This is presented in three sections in each Profile: Description, Analysis and Interpretation.

A brief description of the film and the respondents is given. In the description of the personal data of each respondent, the category of illiteracy is to be presumed where no level of literacy or education is stated.

The analysis of the data revealed that differences in response patterns were quite marked between men and women. Consequently, it has become necessary to present their reactions separately.

The interpretation is made on the basis of explanations that can be found for spectator response in the nature of the audience and the nature of the film. These were specifically observed in (1) the contents of the interview itself, (2) the structure and message of the film and (3) the attitude of the respondents to the interview situation.

No statistical correlations were made and only positive correlations emerging from a qualitative analysis have been described. The variables recorded were sex, age, number of children, religion, caste, education/literacy, exposure to traditional and non traditional media, and knowledge of and general attitude to family planning.

## YEARS OF PROMISE

### DESCRIPTION

The film Years of Promise was shown in Patni on 25 November 1974 in the Harijan basti. The audience was, therefore, mainly restricted to Harijans and the immediately neighbouring houses of the lower caste Muslims.

The film was concerned with the evolution of one family and its problems. It used a sequential story line broadly, though a lot of village activities were shown in a loose structure. There was a third person commentary. The film presents three arguments: the welfare of the children, wife, and harmony in the family, the increasing population of the village not allowing the resources to cope with it, and that man controls his own life and benefits by not adopting a fatalistic attitude.

The respondents were four male (1 Muslim Teli and 3 Hindus 2 Sainis and one Badai), and four female (3 Muslim Teli and 1 Harijan). Among the males two were of the predominant Hindu caste. The pattern reflects the fact that the women were of the immediate neighbourhood whereas the men included others also.

A brief description of the respondents is given below, also stating their exposure to media, their understanding of family planning, and their general attitude in these respects.

ILAM CHAND, aged 29, with no children, is a Hindu Saini, and has studied upto B Sc (Agriculture). His exposure to media is frequent, and he particularly approves of short films on agriculture, mainly because of their information content.

By family planning, he understands the concept of a small family to ensure its welfare. But he disapproves of the way the programme was being implemented. He gave instances of older men or widowers or bachelors who were vasectomised and remarked that family planning should be practiced by younger people who had two or three children. He also feels that the cause for the large population increase among poor people is the lack of diversions (manoranjan) except for the wife and the hookah!

SULEMAN, son of a hakim, is a Muslim Teli aged 31 years with three children, has studied upto Vaidya Visharad. His contact with media is limited to radio and occasional visits to the cinema.

By family planning he clearly understands the concept of having a small family, so as to ensure its welfare; his attitude towards family planning is that people should adopt it.

RAMESH, aged 25, is a Hindu Saini, has studied upto class 6 and has one child. His exposure to media is frequent and he has seen short films on agriculture and family planning which he liked. His attitude to family planning and his understanding was unclear, as perhaps he did not comprehend direct questions on the subject.

RAGHUBIR, aged 32, is a Hindu Badai and has three children. His contact with media is frequent listening to the radio. He was too hostile and difficult regarding family planning to probe his attitude and understanding of it specifically.

JAITON, aged 20 years, is a Muslim Teli. She is literate and has one child. Her media contact is limited to reading books and magazines occasionally. She has seen short films which she does not like because "there was not much of song and dance in them".

By family planning she understands having fewer children and vasectomy, but has no opinion on the subject as she had only one child at present.

SAHIDAN, is 25 years old, is a Muslim Teli with three children. She has had no contact with any form of media, except for having seen our previous film show. By family planning she understands the concept of having a small family, and that sterilisation is a method by which family size could be limited, but when asked her opinion, she said that she did not "think" of family planning.

ZARINA is a Muslim Teli, 19 years old and has no children. She has had no contact with any form of media, does not know what is meant by family planning and has no opinion on the subject.

PHULO is a Hindu Chamar, 22 years old and has two children.

She has had no contact with media. To her, family planning means having fewer children, but has no opinion about it : "I don't think anything about it. There are two children, we eat, drink, play and are healthy".

#### ANALYSIS

The recall of the men was fairly high, though sequential reconstruction of the story was possible by only one of them. Except for one educated respondent, there was also confusion as to whether the film show was all one film or several films (the family planning film was shown in a package of four films).

The incidents that stood out were : the incident of the boy running away when he could not get a slate from his father for school; the doctor at the clinic who talks of vasectomy being a painless and minor operation; and the fact of consent between husband and wife regarding the operation. The first point was mentioned in spontaneous involvement, even when recall was not very high about other events in the film. The fact of consent was mentioned approvingly, even by Raghubir who was a hostile respondent.

The men remembered the puppet show in the exhibition though not the family planning posters and charts. Only one man recalled this. They also realised that the puppet show was about family planning though they could not recall the contents of the song and dance. It must be mentioned that though they recalled the words of the doctor, they were of the male doctor at the clinic who performed the vasectomy. This was despite their being questioned about the lady doctor who came to visit the village and talk to the men and women about sterilisation.

In the case of women, except for Jaitoon, recall was much poorer than that of men. They could, nevertheless, remember generally that a man had got vasectomised, that there was a puppet show and that there was a lady doctor who came to the village. Unlike the men, most women had not even realised the message of the puppet show and only two remembered what the lady doctor had said to the villagers. It is significant that the women remembered the lady doctor's visit to the village and the men, the doctor who performed the vasectomy. Even though recall was poor, the fact of consent between husband and wife for the operation was mentioned approvingly by one of the women.

The commentary form as such was not identified as among all the respondents, men and women, only one person said that the voice was external to the film; most others tried to locate a person in the film who they thought told the story, or said that they did not know who told the story.

Credibility of the medium was not questioned by the men and Ilam Chand and Sulenan understood that it was a representation of reality, - that characters played their roles well, that it was a story of a couple. The objection was not to the medium as such and therefore they could perceive the message. Media expectation was not unfavourable to short films, especially on agriculture. Therefore the men were prepared for a serious message.

Credibility of the medium was questioned by the women, except for one. Replying to whether they thought the people in the film were actual, they would say that they were "nakli" or they seemed real, but were unreal. One woman actually went further to state that she could neither trust any of the characters - like the doctor, - nor did the film have any influence on her, because in the film, everybody was actually unreal. And this came from a woman whose recall and comprehension was otherwise good.

Their media expectation were quite clearly expressed as invariably they wanted that the film should have had song and dance, "I would have liked it better then", or "I don't like this kind of film, I like it with song and dance". Also the first thing they mentioned as likeable in the film was the song and dance of the puppet show. Further, their attitude to answering questions was casual and they would themselves say that they did not pay much attention to the film, but it was entertaining in parts. Most of them said that they did not like the film much.

Among the men, the film had one or the other kind of response, favourable or otherwise. In response to a question as to whether anything in the film had any effect on them, they mentioned different things like the headman's talk with Shambhu or the consent between husband and wife for the vasectomy operation. But only one of them said that the film moved him; the others referred to their own experience and said that they already knew what the film showed, so for the most part, the film had had little effect on them.

Most of the men perceived the first argument, but only partially. Though the film tried to show the disharmony in the family and the deterioration of the mother's health, what was perceived was only the children's welfare. Only one of them was concerned with the second argument of having enough land and resources. In this context he remembered the village headman's argument in the film that if the population increased at this rate, the available resources cannot cope with it. (The film tried to link the problems shown to vasectomy as a solution, by making a last statement that though man is said to be born with his fortune, actually he can control his own destiny). When questioned on this, though all the men agreed that man could control his own destiny, yet with regard to what action they would take themselves, their answers were varied. They approved of Shambhu's vasectomy for himself, (and not necessarily for his village as the narrator sought to point out), only one respondent gave a positive answer, saying that he would have undergone vasectomy much before he reached Shambhu's state. Since he has no children, there is nothing to support or question his statement.

The others were evasive or hostile. Their response initially was to say, "well, I have only 2 or 3 children now, I would like to have more", or "I am not in Shambhu's position, I have only 2 or 3 children" (the film showed Shambhu with 5 or 6 children). But questioned further, they went on to say, "well, one will have to accept it", or "what is in our own hands - there is someone who is supposed to get vasectomy cases and there are those who are the cases". One of them objected strongly to even showing this kind of a film with the incident of vasectomy operation. He drew a parallel between the village headman in the film persuading Shambhu, and some people in his own village who had been assigned to get a certain number of cases for the family planning worker and so went around persuading people because of their own vested interests. This respondent also did not perceive how Shambhu's action could affect his village, (as the narrator suggests in the film). While two were vaguely negative, Raghubir again expressed a strong view saying that one man undergoing vasectomy could not affect the village. It might be useful if 100 or 200 people underwent vasectomy. But the evasiveness or open hostility was accompanied by contradiction as somewhere in the interview they agreed that vasectomy was necessary - but answered negatively as to their own personal choice or intention.

All the men agreed with the doctor who said that vasectomy was a minor operation, and believed him, saying that they knew this already. Nevertheless, they had a negative attitude to vasectomy. They did not comment on the doctors who visited the village to propagate sterilisation.

Of the women, three of them clearly said that the film had no effect on them, saying either that "the characters are all unreal", or indicating that they are against films with this kind of message or that they do not like such films without song and dance. Only one woman said that she enjoyed the film: "dil laga", because she liked the idea that Shambhu and Sita should have fewer children as that would leave the couple freer. But for herself she showed a negative attitude to family planning, saying that she wanted more children than three or four. So the effect of the film was diversion rather than conviction or agreement with its message.

The women did not perceive the problems presented in the film as any argument for family planning and followed up by saying that life is in the hands of the maker. Generally, they disapproved of Shambhu's action. Even though some of them said that what Shambhu did was good for him and his family, "for his eating and earning", or "it leaves the couple free of more troubles", they later contradicted that. But when it came to whether they would adopt family planning if placed in a similar situation as Shambhu's family, the uniform answer was either that "now I have only two children" or "it is wrong to do so as these things are in the hands of god" and "we cannot kill life". "The maker will provide", and "the dor - thread of control, is in his hands". Two of them did not approve of such films being shown. Only one woman, (a non-Muslim, the others female respondents were Muslims), though against vasectomy, gave a different reason. She could not have more children if her husband were vasectomised, and she had only two children. Also, she was the only woman who had faith in the doctor, (though she could not recall what the doctor said) saying she was explaining a "kanuni baat" - something that was for the betterment of oneself. The two who recalled what the doctor said had no faith in the doctor for several reasons, that they disagreed with the message of vasectomy, that the characters were all unreal anyway.

As supporting factors to credibility of a film we considered homophile with characters and environment and approval of and

identification with the main characters. In this case, both the male and female respondents generally identified the characters and environment as those characteristic of a village, but did not express any definite or positive liking for or identification with the characters. Some "liked" them, some disapproved of them (mainly the women) and others were indifferent.

Therefore, among those who at all perceived the problems as presented in the film, (chiefly the welfare of the children with respect to economic benefit and education) the perception of the problem did not lead to vasectomy - or family planning as a solution. This was the main thrust of the film and this relationship between the problem and the solution was not perceived.

INTERPRETATION

Recall, in the case of women, except for Jaitoon who was literate was much poorer than the men. Their answers would not relate to the film but rather to their own feelings quite apart from what was mentioned in the film. They would say that what they had seen the previous night, they could not remember the next day; also it was obvious that their attitude to watching the film and replying to questions was casual. Answers would often be in the nature of - "What can I tell", or "what shall I say", or "the puppet show must have had an effect on Shambhu", "it must have been good for them". Laughter would often accompany answers suggesting their embarrassment in the novelty of this situation of answering questions about a film, and often they would take shelter by saying - "What can I say, I am not educated, I cannot say much".

The other feature they remembered was the puppet show. This was quite related to their media expectations, for invariably they wanted that the film should have song and dance, "I would have liked it better then", or "I don't like this kind of film, I like it with song and dance".

Though they recalled the puppet show and the doctor's visit to the village, in contrast to the men, they could not remember what the show was about or what the doctor 'spoke'. It became apparent from their frequent comments that their perception was unrelated to the commentary which was almost ignored, and the film was watched in segments, and not as a long sequential story.

The treatment of verbal and visual components of the film seemed to influence the men also, whose recall, by comparison, was not poor. But the incidents that were most remembered were presented in a longish, sustained, and dramatised sequence. These were the incident of the boy running away and the idea of consent between husband and wife. On the other hand, the brief display of posters in the exhibition or the narrator's suggestion of Shambhu being an example to the village after undergoing vasectomy had little or no visual support, and consequently were not remembered.

Familiarity with people or context perhaps also influences recall. The doctor, consent to vasectomy, a puppet show, the vasectomy van are all familiar things and these can be found among the women's recall also.

It is obvious that the differing attitude to media, among other things, would also affect the response to film content. This is most obvious among the women whose expectation of film was nonserious and to whom this film had low credibility as a medium. Many of the explanations for the respondent's attitude to and credibility of the film argument is found in their answers as described above. One factor was the inability to project into Shambhu's situation of six children which was quite dissimilar to their own. The unfavourable attitude was also to vasectomy as a method which was final, not allowing the choice of any more children. What stands out also was that vasectomy was not the necessary solution to life's problems. It was also often mentioned that the arguments presented were known to them and the quarrel was not with them but perhaps with the social unacceptability of vasectomy or contraception as well as with the government's present implementation of the programme in that area. This attitude was directly and indirectly expressed by the men and could explain the contradiction between their hostility or evasiveness and agreement at the same time.

Extended to own health & children's health

There was also a significant relationship between the respondent's general attitude to family planning and their response to the film, that is, if they were favourable, then they responded favourably to the film; if they were vague or hostile, that was again reflected in the response to the film as far as the family planning message was concerned.

Also, it is observed that their identification or homophile with the characters or otherwise did not show any relationship to their attitude to the film as such.

CHOR CHOR

DESCRIPTION

Chor Chor was shown in Patni on 24 December 1974 in Brahmpal's house where the audience comprised of Muslim Telis, Hindu Sainis, Hindu Baniyas, and Brahmans, in that order.

Chor Chor uses a first person commentary, and has for its arguments the incidence of land division between two sets of cousins who are one and seven, and the consequent imbalance in their fortunes. This forces the seven brothers to seek menial work in the town while the single cousin returns to his large land after completing his education and lives a prosperous life with his wife and children, though saddened slightly by his loneliness. The visuals are composed largely of inanimate objects like houses, fields, aeroplanes, bridges - environment rather than moving, talking, living people. There is a preponderance of objects, and people appear in fragments and short sequences. The narration is in the first person, supposedly by a maternal cousin about the cousins in the story. The approach is humanitarian and the narrative draws heavily on sentiment and nostalgia. The argument centres around land division and its consequences in economic terms. This film was shown without its direct family planning message which occurs only in the end, so that we could assess the credibility of the argument on its own, and let the respondents offer a solution to the perceived problems in the film, without family planning being suggested as a solution.

The respondents included 5 men (3 Muslims; 1 Teli, 2 Gada; and 2 Hindu Sainis) and 5 women (3 Muslim Teli, and 2 Hindu Brahman). A brief description of the respondents is given below, stating their media exposure and understanding of the family planning concept, as also their general attitude in this regard. Since this film is based on land division, their landed status is also mentioned.

BALBIR SINGH is a Hindu Saini, aged 32. He has one son and

two daughters, and is educated upto the Intermediate level. His exposure to media is infrequent, though he visits the cinema about 10-12 times a year. He likes short films also as they 'talk of useful things'. He thinks family planning is a very important matter and should be practised to stop the increasing population. He owns land.

GOVERDHAN DAS, 27 years old, is a Hindu Saini; he has one daughter and has studied upto class eight. His exposure to media is almost nil, except for occasional films once or twice a year. He does not remember seeing short films. His understanding of family planning is control of population to further progress but his personal opinion is non committal 'it is all right'. He has no land personally or in the family.

MUSTAFI is a Muslim Gada, aged 20-25 and has no children. His media contact is occasional. He has seen short films and likes 'the work shown in them'. His understanding of family planning is a limit of 2 or 3 children per family and his own opinion is that the fewer the children the better it is. He does not own any land.

TASAVVUR is a Muslim Gada aged 26, has two children, and though he can sign his name, he is otherwise illiterate. His contact with media is frequent, but he expressed no opinion about them, including short films. His understanding of family planning is merely that it is good and his opinion is 'it is all right'. He has no land either in the family or personally.

IQBAL is a Muslim Teli, 31 years old, has 4 children and though he can sign his name, he is otherwise illiterate. His contact with media is frequent, but he says that he has not seen short films. By family planning he understands having a small family and his personal opinion is one of willingness to accept it. He has land.

SAHEEDAN, aged 25 years, is a Muslim Teli and has four children. Her media contact is nil, except for having seen short films which she liked for their information value. She does not know the concept of family planning and has no opinion about it. Her husband has land jointly owned with his brother.

SANJIDA, aged 25, is a Muslim Teli and has four children. She listens to the radio often but her exposure to traditional media and films is occasional. She has seen short films and liked the agricultural films for their information value. By family planning she understands having fewer children, and feels that if there are too many children, there is shortage of food and space. For herself, she hopes that she will not have more children. The four children she has are more than enough. Her husband has land jointly owned with his brother.

SHUBRA, aged 20, is a Muslim Teli and has two children. Her contact with radio is frequent, and she sees song and dance shows 'every time there is a wedding in the village'. She had no previous exposure to cinema. She does not know what is meant by family planning and has no opinion about it. Her husband has no land.

SHAKUNTALA, aged 25, is a Hindu Brahman and has three children. She listens to the radio frequently, but her exposure to traditional media and cinema is occasional. She likes short films for their information value. By family planning she understands having fewer children and for herself she did not want more than the three she had as she could not afford to bring up more. Her husband has no land.

PHOOLWATI, 25 years old, is a Hindu Brahman and has 5 children. Her media contact is negligible. Though she has seen short films, she does not like them as there are no song and dance sequences in them, and remarked that she preferred listening to the radio. She does not understand the concept of family planning and hence has no opinion on the subject, saying

'god knows'. Her husband has no land.

#### ANALYSIS

Of the men, most of them 'liked' the film, though they actually confused the whole film package for one film, and the liking was not emphatic. The film medium as such was remarked upon by two of them saying that 'in films, nothing real is shown, it is all made up - ~~is it~~' or that the film was merely a story, as the producer had to make his money and make up a few good scenes.

With respect to this particular film, two others found that everything did not look actual - only parts did. Therefore, the overall credibility of film presentation was low for the men even though the events might have been credible. Two of them understood the commentary as a form though none could identify the commentator as the maternal cousin.

The recall of two men was accurate. But the others, were confused about various things - though they remembered the 'batwara' and the difference in condition between the two sets of cousins. What happened before and right after the 'batwara' was in doubt. For instance, why did land division take place, what happened to the cousins. They did not remember the uncle's death; one man did not know what happened to Ratan (the well off cousin), one could not recall the condition of the seven brothers, and whether they also stayed on in the village; one thought Ratan also worked in the town but had a better job. Only the last portion was again remembered regarding Ratan's new house and the ruined old house, and the corresponding difference in the condition of the cousins. Various supporting factors like the sentiment associated with the old house as shown in the beginning of the film, and the death of the uncle did not register with most of them, though the plight of Ratan as the loser in the game was always remembered. Some also saw the irony that later the roles were reversed and Ratan was happier than the others. Facts mentioned largely in the commentary like the river scene being in Banaras, and the relationship among the boys were almost uniformly not comprehended. On the whole, confusion in recall indicates some confusion in comprehension and this seemed to lessen the involvement even though the 'batwara' was an episode that created involvement.

All the men found land division a credible enough situation

which they could relate to, and feel definite about. But how far this and its consequences as shown in the film provided an automatic argument for family planning brought different opinions and varying degrees of credibility and acceptance. Three of them perceived only disadvantage in 'batwara', either for economic reasons or because it caused separation with no gain. The other two did not feel so strongly about it, saying that it had relative advantage and disadvantage, depending on who got better land. At least, each had his own land to work on. The disadvantage being the loss of unity. In fact the desire for unity was something that was strongly felt by most of the men, and consequently, most of them also expressed their feeling of injustice about the manner in which land was divided, saying that it should be equally divided among all the individual members and not between families. That is, if there are two in one family, and seven in the other, the land should be divided into 9 portions and not 2, as this created an imbalance in distribution where there had been none, denying equal opportunities.

But again, this should be done only if it was inevitable. The general feeling was that land should not be divided at all, and even if it was done by law, the members of the family should cooperate and work on the land as one unit. This would be economically better and also maintain unity.

Commenting on the consequences of 'batwara,' most of them felt that under the circumstances, the seven brothers, though they were not too happy in the towns, yet it was the only thing that they could do. Living in the village, it would have been impossible for them to make their ends meet. But they would have been happier in the village if circumstances had been otherwise. Difference between Ratan and the condition of the seven brothers was perceived; economic reasons were cited, supported by the fact that Ratan was more educated and that he was the only son. This was mentioned by three out of five of the men. Some of them also remarked that in their minds they were equal and only their circumstances were different.

Out of the five men, only one reacted contrarily to the film's point of view, not having any strong feelings for the 'batwara' episode and perceiving the seven brothers as quite happy. On himself he says, the film had no effect. His recall was also poorer than the others.



Though the women said they 'liked', the film, only one was definite about it. Though all of them did not question the credibility of the medium, one woman found the film only partly actual and another said 'I don't know if everything that is shown in a film is real'.

Among the women the recall was poor. Also, 4 out of the 5 women said that they did not pay attention to the words but rather to the moving picture - ~~कहना कि वह~~ and that they had difficulty in understanding the language. A couple of them also excused themselves by saying, 'I am not educated' or 'I did not know that I would have to answer questions, otherwise I would have paid more attention'. On the whole, their concentration was poor.

The only thing that was uniformly remembered was the children's 'kabaddi' game, which was also identified. Though they all thought the children were happy, nobody remarked, as the men did, on Ratan's unhappiness when he lost. The relationship between the boys was not understood. Though the old house and the river was recalled no one, except one woman, knew whose house it was, or felt anything about it and in what context it was shown. The river scene, two women said, was in the hills.

The 'batwara' was remembered by four women. The other had no recall of it. Consequent to 'batwara', except for Sanjida no one remembered what happened to the seven brothers or to Ratan. Though many of them remembered the return of the cousin for the wedding, what he found in the village was not clearly perceived. Though they all remembered Ratan's new house, some did not remember the condition of the old house and the seven brothers. Some said that the seven brothers were all right, or gave self contradictory answers, indicating that they were not clear about this. Definitive answers only came when questioned further regarding the difference between the cousins. Whereas two did not remember, the others said that Ratan was better off financially as he had more land.

With the exception of Sanjida, according to the other women the film had no effect on them. Part of this is because many arguments of the film were not perceived at all and the reaction to what was perceived was not definitive. For instance, asked what they felt about the land division, they said that there could be advantage and disadvantage,

depending on God and fate. Two felt that it is advantageous as each gets his own land and disharmony is prevented. Only one woman added to this that 'batwara' as shown in the film was disadvantageous to the brothers but she did not relate it to her own experience.

The consequences of 'batwara' as shown in the film, of the seven brothers leaving the village, was not perceived at all. Further, only three of the women vaguely perceived the difference in the economic condition between the cousins and attributed it to Ratan having more land. This was not related to his being an only son. As a solution or aid to these problems, most said, 'I don't know' or said hard work is the way to bear poverty, or that if there are more children, though it would be difficult to look after them when young, later they would bring in more income to the family. Considering the answers of those who perceived even one argument in the film, that is, that the batwara left Ratan better off than the other cousins, the attitude to a small family was conditional. 'If there is only one earning member, a large family will be unhappy', 'a small family has less burden to bear'. Only one woman said that 'the one who is alone is better off, a small family will be happier'. Two of the women did not relate their responses to the film at all and therefore could not be considered. Therefore, on the whole, the argument of the film and its message was not credible to the women.

Supporting factors to credibility like the familiarity of the old house and the children's game as well as 'liking' Ratan's family became invalid as they were not related to the message of the film but perceived as isolated things. Again, homophile with characters was negative 'the people in the film do not wear clothes like us', 'they are much better off than us and do not belong here'. On the other hand, the environment was perceived as a village environment.

The women's response to the film was generally vague and confused. Even the problems shown in the film, which were partially perceived, were not related, except by one woman, to the idea of the small family as a solution.

#### INTERPRETATION

The reason for the women's poor recall is explained in their

own answers: they pay attention to the pictures and not the words. So, either the picture delivers the message, and the words are tied to the picture, or the commentary is so well supported by visuals that it can be picked up.

Though this is not so pronounced with the men, it is the portion of the film right before and after the 'batwara' that is confused in recall, and drop out is greatest, among the men and the women. In this portion of the film, even short sequences are absent. Instead there are isolated shots that are closely linked to the narration and not visually to each other. Again, the seven brothers are not actually shown in their urban work environments, carrying on their lives. Whereas later on, they are at least present in the village through a longish sequence, while the narrator talks of their condition. It is significant hereto note again that women remembered Ratan's condition more definitely, his house and family were actually shown.

Details mentioned in the commentary like the location of the river scene in Banaras, and the relationship among the eight boys, are again not remembered. Rather, the respondents interpret what they recall in the light of their own immediate and familiar knowledge or experience, saying that the river is in Hardwar or that the boys were stepbrothers. A couple of the respondents, one man and one woman, confused the film for others in the package.

Message credibility of the film was fairly high with most of the men. The film chose as its basic argument an event that was credible. But the same thing was not the case with the women, whose attitude to land division was not one of strong feeling against it. On the other hand, neither did they feel involved with the film nor comprehend the events; they found the characters alien, and did not catch the sentiment on which the film played. The men felt involved, despite their confused comprehension, and responded to the sentiment expressed in the film regarding the old house now in shambles, the cousins, the irony of fate in Ratan's and the seven brothers' change of fortune and the fact that the difference in their later lives was not because of any 'difference in their hearts or calibre' which is also mentioned by the narrator. Here it is seen that the sentimental portions of the narration are picked up but the informational details are not.

Though it is noticeable that the two men who had a good recall and were influenced by the film, were both landed and the two women who somewhat perceived the main argument of the film were also landed. Among the men, even those who did not have land seemed quite influenced by the film (though not as much as the landed), while the landless women showed a big difference - they had no recall, opinion or perception of the argument, and no solution in mind. The men were said to be more aware of and influenced by outsiders, like relatives and distant family members, than the women, and therefore could look outside their own immediate experience.

So, the central factor seems to be the attitude to land division, which, if it were strong like in the case of the men, involved them in the film, and elicited a response of agreement, and compensated for the confusion in comprehension and only partial credibility of characters. Whereas, among the women, the attitude to land division being indefinite, it neither involved them nor was there much credibility of agreement with the argument.

The attitude towards a small family in relation to the film is uniformly seen to be the same as their general predisposition towards the small family norm.

As a film, Chor Chor has wisely chosen its main argument, at least for men, has failed in its frequent non-sequential structure, but scored in its sentimental narration and there is every basis to say that its underplayed message of family planning as one aid to bear with these difficult changing times would have found sympathy at least with the men.

CHAUTHA PALNA

DESCRIPTION

The film 'Chautha Palna' was shown in Patni on 28 December 1974 in the Gada Muslim area and the audience was mainly drawn from Gada Muslims, Hindu Sainis, Balmikis, some Harijans and Muslim Telis.

'Chautha Palna' is about a middle-aged woman with three children and her husband's younger sister. The sister-in-law addresses a song to her bhabhi and dances round her. The song is in Hindi. The house is urban and the two women are fairly modern looking. The song is sung teasingly and lightly. The sister-in-law admonishes her bhabhi not to have more children. The main argument of the song is that her (bhabhi's) beauty will be lost if she has more children and that 'she should not have her garden filled with falling leaves' - that everyone will be happier if she does not have more children.

The shot with the two women is frozen, and a commentator says that the problem of a large family that is placed before the woman by her sister-in-law, is the problem of the entire nation.

From this sequence, the film shifts to the map of India. Groups of children and crowds of people are shown with numbers superimposed while the commentary says that in India three children are born every two seconds. The question that is asked is, 'how will these children get food, shelter, clothing, education?' General population statistics are given. Visuals of classroom rowdyism and of young boys smoking and gambling on the streets and of crowds are shown. The commentary says that the crowds will one day destroy everything. As a re-inforcement to this message, a tree consumed by locusts is shown. This is followed by posters on family planning which is pointed out as the solution.

Reverting to the sister-in-law, the older woman is seen going to a family planning clinic.

Our sample consisted of 4 male respondents (2 Muslims - 1 Gada and 1 Nai, and 2 Hindus - 1 Saini and 1 Dhanak) and 5 female respondents (1 Muslim Gada and 4 Hindus - 1 Jamadar, 1 Saini and 2 Balmikis). A brief description of the

respondents is given below, stating their exposure to media, their understanding of family planning and their general attitude in these respects.

MUNNAVAR, is a Muslim 'Gada' aged 22, has two children and is illiterate but can sign his name. He has had very little contact with radio and traditional media but goes to the cinema twice or thrice in a month. He has seen short films which he likes because of their information content.

He refused to answer the questions relating to family planning.

KUNWA, 27 years old, is a Hindu Dhanak and has two daughters. He listens to the radio sometimes but has had no exposure to cinema. His contact with traditional media is limited to seeing tamashas about 5 to 10 times in a year.

Educating one's children is what he understands by family planning but had no opinion of his own on this issue.

PADAM CHAND is 21 years old, is a Hindu Saini and has no children. He has studied upto class 5. He rarely reads books and magazines, does not go to the cinema and has limited exposure to traditional media. He has seen short films on agriculture and defence which he likes because of their information content.

By family planning he understands having fewer children and when asked for his opinion on the subject, said that people should have fewer children because the population was increasing.

JINDA HASAN, a Muslim Nai, is 28 years of age and has 3 children. He is illiterate though he can sign his name. His contact with traditional media is frequent and he listens to the radio sometimes. He goes to the cinema once a month and has seen short films which he likes. When asked what he understood by family planning he said that it was for the poor that they should understand and follow it. His own opinion on the issue was 'it is all right'.

KASHO, a Hindu Janadar, is 16 years old and has no children. Her contact with traditional media is negligible and non-existent with non-traditional media.

She has no knowledge of family planning.

KARMO, aged 20 years, is a Muslim Gada and has two children. She listens to the radio sometimes but has had no previous exposure to cinema or to any traditional media. She has no knowledge of family planning.

KUNTA has two sons, is 23 years of age and is a Hindu Balmiki. She has studied upto class seven. She listens to the radio and reads books and magazines sometimes, she can also write letters. She has been exposed to traditional media but says that she has had no contact with it ever since she got married. She has not seen any films in the last year and a half. She had seen short films while she was in school and liked them because they were for all kinds of development.

By family planning she understands the necessity of having fewer children since it is good for one's health too. When asked for her opinion, she said that there should be few children so that they can eat and live better and lead healthy lives. Also, that there would be fewer fights among them when they grew up and there would be less division of property. On the whole, she felt that it is in one's own interest to have a small number of children.

BALA is 25 years of age and has two daughters. She is a Hindu Saini. She can read a little and sign her name. She listens to the radio sometimes and also gets someone to read out to her from magazines and books once in a while. She has seen a film show three times so far. She had seen a few dramas when she was a child but has no contact with traditional media any more. She has seen short films which she likes because of their information content.

By family planning she understood a small family being a happy one and a large family being unhappy. When asked for her opinion she said that times being such, there was no need for a third child if one had one son and one daughter. However, she said that she could not have an operation since she had two daughters and people felt that she had to have a son.

MUNNI, 24 years old, is a Hindu Balmiki and has two sons. She has no contact with radio but often gets someone to read to her from books and magazines. She has been exposed to traditional media. She goes to the cinema once in a while

and has seen short films on agriculture and defence.

She does not know what family planning means.

#### ANALYSIS

The film was liked by everybody. One of them felt happy because he said the film was about having fewer children. When asked if they thought the characters were true to life, the replies were varied. While one of them evaded the question, two of them said that the characters must be real, that is why they were shown, while to the fourth, the characters could be true to life, *सिनेमा में खतरा है*. On the whole, men seemed to be less involved in the film nor was the film very credible to them.

The recall of the men was vague, disjointed or incoherent. In the case of two of the respondents, the attitude was generally casual. However, they all understood that the film was about not having more than three children. Only one of them, however, located the message in the song.

All the four respondents recalled the relationship between the two women and also the number of children in the house but only one respondent recalled the content of the song. According to him, the song was about not having a fourth child, and that the 'nanad' was praising her brother and telling her bhabhi that her brother loved her and that already there were three children in the house and that it was good to have only three children and not more. Two of the respondents could not recall the words or the story of the song even though they said that they had no difficulty in following the words of the song. When asked why the nanad was singing to her bhabhi, one of them said, *जाना नहीं* and the other said that he did not know what exactly the nanad was saying to the bhabhi. The fourth respondent was unable to recount the story as he was unable to follow the words of the song. Two of the respondents liked the song.

All the four respondents said that they had no difficulty in understanding the language of the commentary. Three respondents recalled the commentary in varying degrees, one saying he spoke of having at the most three children while another said that the commentator said something about family planning, and a third recalled only the portion about the

locusts. But these respondents could not recall any of the pictures that accompanied the commentary, except the man who recalled the locusts and its significance.

On the other hand, the respondent who had a better recall of the story of the song, mentioned the scene of crowds of children and another scene of a pandit teaching children but could not recall the commentary at all or the scene of the locusts on the tree.

The only thing that was uniformly remembered by them was the main theme of the film and its overall message of having less number of children. After having grasped the message, the attitude of the men to this film seemed to become casual and disinterested.

All the female respondents liked the film and found nothing objectionable in the film. Two of them particularly liked the singing and dancing by the two women in the film.

When asked if they found the characters true to life, except for one respondent, the rest found them real. In the case of this one respondent, the response was, *किन्तु मैं ही दो अंकों के अक्षरों*. For another respondent, however, the characters were true to life because that is how they were able to shoot the film.

The women's overall recall of the film, however, was generally poor except for one respondent. 'I do not know' or 'I do not remember' were characteristic responses of three of the respondents. One of them could not recount the story or the content of the song because she had not followed the language of the song. Two of them said that they had followed the language of the song. However, this was not borne out by their responses. This was probably because of the casual attitude to the film of one respondent and the other saying that she could not see properly. All they seemed to comprehend of the song was that it had to do with two women and three children. The other two women recalled not only the three children and the relationship of the women but also had an idea of the general theme of the song. Out of these two, one had poor recall of particular incidents. The recall of the fifth respondent was more coherent. But when asked why the nanad asked the bhabhi not to have 'cheen' in her 'angan', she wrongly interpreted it to mean that since the bhabhi did not give anything to the nanad at the time of the

childbirth, the nanad asked her bhabhi to adopt family planning.

The female respondents generally had problems in following the commentary. The content of the commentary was missed by most of them. However, they all seemed to recall the scenes with crowds of children studying in schools and some recalled the scene of the locusts on the tree. Most of them did not perceive what effect the song sung by the nanad had on the bhabhi and none of them recalled that the bhabhi went to the family planning clinic in the end. Therefore, only two women knew what the film was about and this they knew through the song, while all the men knew what the film was about; but only one through the song and the others through the commentary.

Most of the male respondents did not perceive the argument of the song. Only one of them said that it was sung for the bhabhi not to have the fourth child. None of them perceived the relationship between the bhabhi's situation and the nation's condition. But three of the respondents perceived the argument of the commentator that with increasing population and shortage of food, everything would be destroyed like the locusts destroying the tree. They also perceived this as the reason for the commentator saying that family planning should be adopted and expressed agreement with that statement.

When asked whether the song had any effect on the bhabhi, the answers were varied. One respondent wrongly perceived the effect to be a desire on the part of the bhabhi for another child, another did not perceive any effect at all, while the other two felt that the bhabhi was affected by the song and that, "it was a good effect". Despite the variation in their responses, they all agreed that what the bhabhi did was good for her and for the nation. To what extent this response can be taken seriously, is questionable, as their own attitudes to family planning were either casual or nonserious. Only one respondent felt that he would himself accept family planning if such a need arose in the future because he felt that with one or two children, one can feed and clothe them better and generally bring them up in a better way.

In terms of their attitude to the characters in the film, there was generally either no response from them or an

indifferent response. Three of the respondents found the life style of the characters and their environment alien but felt that similar events could happen to any ordinary person. One respondent thought that the characters seemed to be from Bangla Desh and therefore did not feel that the events of the film could happen to any ordinary person.

None of the female respondents perceived the argument of the song, and their responses were varied. One of them did not perceive the argument at all, another misperceived it while the third said, ~~and then added~~ and then added, that whatever God gives should be accepted, meaning that she knew it had to do with children. The other two respondents merely identified that the song was related to family planning but did not know why. The relationship between the bhabhi's situation and the nation's condition was generally not perceived by them. Only two of them rightly perceived the commentary's argument about the increasing population destroying everything and consequently agreed that the growth of population needed to be checked.

Only one respondent perceived that the bhabhi was affected by the song, and yet they all agreed that her accepting family planning was good for her and for the nation. Two of them, however, were casual and nonserious in their responses and as such, their answers can be discounted. Further, only one respondent had a favourable attitude to family planning and said that it had to be accepted for the welfare of women and home. And yet, when asked what she would do, she said, 'I don't know'. One respondent was hostile to family planning, while the fifth respondent, though generally favourable towards family planning, seemed to think that it was something that depended on an individual and not something that could be forced. When asked whether she would do the same, she said "yes" but qualified it by saying that if she has 4 or 5 daughters then she would not do so. The film generally seemed to have no effect on the female respondents.

In terms of their attitude to the characters, the responses were again varied. Two of them had nothing to say about the characters, one of them liked the main character while another liked the children. Again, with regard to their perception of the life style and the environment of the characters, there were differences in the response pattern. While some found that the life style and the environment

were familiar; others found them alien. One of the respondents thought the life style to be Bengali. Again, some said that the events shown in the film could happen to everyone while others said that they could not.

#### INTERPRETATION

The film was liked by all the respondents. But the reason for their liking the film was not made clear. Only two female respondents said that they particularly liked the singing and the dancing by the two women in the film.

But recall was generally poor for both the male and female respondents. "I don't know", and "I don't remember" seemed to be their characteristic response patterns. Non committal answers, accompanied by laughter at times seemed to suggest that their answers were often of dubious value.

Though all the male respondents understood the main theme of the film and overall message of having less number of children, this was not so with the female respondents. The only uniform recall was of the visually sustained song sequence between bhabhi and nanad and the three children. Nevertheless, the song's content was generally not remembered.

The women seemed to recall visuals rather than the spoken (or sung) word, while the men's recall was just the opposite. However, comparing recall of words between song and commentary, the women usually had more problems with the commentary than the men, whereas the men seemed to pay more attention to the content of the commentary than to that of the song.

The film seems to have had no effect on anyone. One man perceived the argument of the song and five respondents perceived the argument expressed in the commentary section. However, this was a partial perception after a detailed question specifically recalling the significance of the locusts destroying everything. But none of the respondents, except one, were favourable to themselves adopting family planning. This was despite the fact that three respondents had a favourable attitude to family planning, but after the course of interviewing about the film only one respondent still expressed a favourable attitude. (the other six respondents had noncommittal attitudes before and after the interview on the film).

The analysis of this film has relevance in that 'song and dance' had been the preferred mode of presentation as expressed by most of the female respondents. And yet their reaction to Crautha Palna shows that the message that was couched in the song was not clearly perceived by the men or the women. The general argument presented in the commentary was better perceived than what was expressed through the song. And of course, the overall perception of the film was also rather low. To what extent a serious message embedded in a form of presentation such as the 'song and dance' can be of communicative value, is therefore questionable.

## TEEN SAAL BAAD

### DESCRIPTION

Teen Saal Baad was shown on 30 December 1974 in Patni, at Zulfan's house whose neighbourhood consisted of Muslim Gadas, Hindu Sainis and Valmikis (Bhangis).

Teen Saal Baad uses a story format with dialogue. The theme is of having fewer children by spacing between pregnancies and using the loop for this purpose. This would make for happiness and better health of children and mother, as repeated child bearing ruins the mother's health and too many children cannot be looked after well and there is difficulty in doing so. The children also suffer. The film portrays the happiness of a newly wed Muslim couple. The Muslim girl visits her neighbour, Ganga, the potter Binda's wife, who is in labour and in great pain, and finally has a stillbirth. She also sees Ganga's numerous children in disarray, and looking uncared for. This influences her, as well as the doctor's words to Ganga's husband, explaining the reason for the stillborn child. The Muslim girl visits the doctor with her husband, (she is pregnant) and the doctor advises her to have few children, and use the loop for spacing. The main arguments are the mother's health being ruined by repeated pregnancies, the stillborn child illustrating this, and the poor and weak condition of the children and mother and the children's neglect when they are numerous.

The respondents for this film consisted of 5 men (3 Muslim Gada, 1 Muslim Teli and 1 Hindu Saini) and 5 women (2 Hindu Saini, 2 Valmiki and 1 Muslim Teli). A brief description of the respondents is given below, stating their exposure to media, their understanding of family planning and their general attitude in these respects.

MASHOOQ HASSAN, a Muslim Gada, is 30 years old and has two sons and a daughter. He can read and write Urdu.

His media contact is limited. Nevertheless, he sees drama and films 3 or 4 times a year. He likes short films as they give information, and even non-literate people can understand them.

By family planning, he understands that one should have fewer children and that there should be spacing between them. He is favourable to family planning, saying that living is costlier and the population is increasing.

BUDDHU, 30 years old, is a Muslim Gada. He has two children.

His media contact is negligible, but he sees dramas and nautanki twice or thrice a year. A film a month is the rule with him. He has seen short films as well. He could not say why he likes these.

By family planning he understands 'have a vasectomy done, and stop bearing children'. Asked about his own opinion, he was evasive and said that each man should act according to his own wishes.

GULSHANABBAR, a Muslim Gada, is about 23 or 24 years old, and has two sons. He has studied upto the fourth class.

His contact with radio and traditional media is frequent. He sees dramas four or five times a year. He has not seen films except for our previous show.

He claimed to know nothing about family planning and hence has no opinion.

NUR ILAHI, a Muslim Teli is 25 years old and has one son.

His media contact is good. He sees dance and song shows and drama three or four times a year, and eight to ten films a year. He likes short films because "they have useful information" and they are also entertaining.

By family planning he understands that one should have only a few children. For himself, he said that it was all right; and he also said that his wife is a user of the loop.

MAN SINGH, a Hindu Saini, is 26 years old and has one son. He has been to school upto class eleven.

His contact with radio and printed media is limited, but he sees song and dance shows and dramas two to four times a year. He sees a film nearly every month, and has seen short films as well. He likes only those films that are relevant.

By family planning he understands having only as many children as one's means permit. His own view of family planning is that our country is poor because its population has increased too much. A large family means that sometimes there is enough to eat and sometimes not - these are times of inflation. If one family has a smaller income it lowers the wealth of the entire country. So, everyone benefits by family planning.

RAJKALI, a Hindu Saini, is 24 years old, and has two children.

Her contact with radio and printed media is limited. She sees 'svaangs' and dramas once or twice a year. She has seen short films. She likes them as they show all kinds of improvements.

By family planning she understands any method to keep the family small. Her attitude to it is favourable and she says that these two children are enough for her. "The times are hard, and so there should be less children".

RAJOBALA, 25 years old, is a Hindu Valmiki and has two children.

Her media contact is limited, and she has seen 'song, drama, Ramlila and film', twice or thrice a year. She sees short films as well, and likes them, too. She says that they show proper manners, and depict all kinds of new methods.

By family planning she understands having fewer children. She adds: *अच्छे बच्चे हैं जेना रखा है* She herself would not like to have too many children, because their income is low, and said that she tries not to have any more children.

MINA, is a Muslim Gada. She is 21 years old and has one daughter.

Her media contact is practically nil. By family planning she understands having fewer children. Her own opinion is that one should not have too many children. With a few children everything gets along fine.

KAUSHAL, a Hindu Valmiki, is 18 years old and has no children.

Her media contact is limited. She has had a few books read

out to her, and makes an annual visit to the 'movies, mela, etcetera'. She has seen a few short films and has liked them. She did not say why she liked films; merely that since the whole world was seeing films, she too saw films.

She claimed not to know about family planning and hence has no opinion.

KAMALA, a Hindu Saini, is 25 years old and has two children.

Her media contact is limited, but she manages to see Ramlila, a 'svaang', and film twice or thrice a year. She has seen some short films and likes films because they provide a window to the world, and one should keep in touch with what goes on in it.

By family planning she understands that one should have fewer children. Her own opinion is that many children make for misery.

#### ANALYSIS

Two of the men said that they would have liked the film better with song and dance. Two others liked the film somewhat. One respondent, Mashooq Hassan, resented such films altogether, saying that persuasion by fear is wrong, and persuasion by film is ineffective as showing examples of other people's lives and stories makes no difference to the individual's watching it and it is better to have person-to-person persuasion taking into consideration each individual's problems.

All the men expressed spontaneously that the people and the environment of the film was somehow different from theirs. But nevertheless, they also strongly felt that the characters were real; in fact, one respondent said of the film and characters that it was "realistic". Language was found to be different from their own by three men, but the others found it familiar; they understood the film.

All the men, except one, not only placed the film as concerning family planning, but also identified the doctor as the one who delivers this message. One of them also said that Razia adopts family planning, and another respondent mentioned that the film was about family planning, and specifically, the loop.

Sequential reconstruction was done by three of them.

Though the dargah was remembered by four of the men, only one man recognised it as that of Haji Mastan. (In the film, one of the functions of showing this particular dargah was to evoke its association with both Hindus and Muslims.) Nevertheless, none of them realised its significance. In fact, Man Singh, a Hindu, made a remark that whatever you do, you can never bring the Hindus and Muslims together, thinking this to be one of the objectives of the film.

The main storyline was followed by most of the men, that is, the Muslim couple are in the dargah, they buy bangles, Ganga is ill and has stillborn child. Razia looks after her at that point, the doctor comes and the general condition of Binda's wife and family are remembered. Later, Razia goes to the doctor and the doctor advises her to have fewer children, space them out and use a loop for this purpose. Only one respondent thought that Razia, after getting married at the dargah, was unhappy as she had no child and went to the doctor for a remedy, and got treated successfully. He remembered what happened to Binda's wife but did not connect that with Razia in any way. This man also said that Razia was happy at the end as she had successfully borne a child.

Though the overall recall of the men was good, there are certain points to be noted on the negative side. Though the condition of Binda's wife was remembered, as also the events that occur when Razia is there, - the pitcher of water gets broken, the children pester Razia, and the large number of children, - what the doctor said to Binda is not remembered on first questioning, whereas what she said to Razia is remembered. Also, conversation at the bangleshop or between Razia and her husband in Razia's house was not recalled, even though the incidents themselves were remembered. (The conversation at both these places inform about Razia's pregnancy, and her projected fears after seeing Ganga's dead child.)

Similarly, only a couple of the men, dinly recalled that when Razia came to her own house, she was frightened, but even these two men did not understand the sequence of the flashback and the mental process that Razia went through. None of the men understood this sequence, unlike the women, who did.

There was confusion as to why Razia went to the doctor. Only

two men realised that she was pregnant. Two others thought that she was ill and therefore went to the doctor, but the latter advised family planning in the course of her conversation. One respondent, of course, thought the doctor gave her a remedy so that she could have a child.

All the men were unclear as to the flashforward in the end, except the man who misread the film completely and thought that Razia was cured and was happy with a baby. It is interesting that the other men, unlike the women, were not very definite and expressed their doubt as to what the last sequence meant, saying, "It is not clear in the film if she uses the loop or not", "it is unclear if she used the loop, or actually had a child", "I do not understand why there are so many photographs of children, and suddenly there is a child on her lap, and then at the end there is no child". (In the film, the intent was only to show Razia's vision of the child and her happiness thinking of it).

All the women said definitely that they liked the film; two of them even said that they liked this film as it "showed truths of life", and "talked wisely of them" and for "its message of fewer children to help the mother's health". Only one woman said that though she liked the film, it would have been nicer if it had been a "city film" - a commercial film. All the women also found the characters real.

Most of the women claimed to understand the language. Also, four of them could do a sequential reconstruction of the film, though only with help from the interviewer. Four of the women recognised it as a film on family planning, and two (on questioning) identified the doctor as delivering the message.

The dargah was recognised for what it was by three women but identified by none. Two of them confused it for a house or a hospital.

The main storyline was remembered correctly by all the women, that is, the Muslim couple are in a dargah (or some other place), they buy bangles in a bazaar, Ganga is ill, Razia goes to look after her, gives her water, the doctor comes, and a dead child is born. Later, Razia goes to the doctor and she is advised to have less children.

Binda's wife's condition was particularly mentioned by all the women, that she was in pain and weak; the pitcher breaking incident was mentioned by three women and two of them mentioned the large family around the woman.

Though, like the men, the women did not recall the conversation between Razia and her husband in the bangle shop and later in their house; unlike the men, they all understood the sequence when Razia comes home from Binda's house. They said that she recalled what she saw, was frightened, and went to sleep after a lot of thought or that she almost fainted.

Again, unlike the men, all the women except one realised that Razia was pregnant and so went to the doctor. Three of them said that the doctor examines Razia, and one said that the doctor told her she was going to have a child in two month's time. Four of the women recalled what the doctor told Binda after the birth of the dead child, though two did so on repeated questioning. All the women remembered the general advice the doctor gave Razia regarding having fewer children to ensure better health of the mother and children; four of them recalled spacing as a practice to be followed, and two, the use of the loop as a method.

The last sequence was misunderstood as Razia in fact having a child, and consequently being happy. But all of them at least realised that she was happy, and unlike the men related it to the doctor's advice, that is, she was happy because she followed the doctor's advice of having fewer children, and spacing them out. In two cases they related her happiness also to her using the loop.

In comparison with the men, the women's recall in the film was as good as, if not better at times, than that of the men. The only thing that some of them did not recall was the loop as a method and the dargah; on the other hand, many of the other elements like the effect on Razia of her experience in Binda's house, and the fact of her pregnancy, registered with the women. However, it is interesting to note the different reactions of the men and women to the last sequence.

This level of recall of the women was despite the reticence expressed by four of them that "I am not educated, I cannot remember the film or answer these questions"; "I can only remember when I see the film, I have forgotten now"; "I do not have any children, I do not remember anything of the

film" and two of them saying that "I saw the pictures, and did not listen to the talk".

The film's overall credibility was higher for the women than the men and so was their "liking" of the film, which was quite unconditional and emphatic in a couple of cases. Though both men and women showed quite a high degree of involvement, the women's was greater than the men's.

One of the men said he was affected by and felt afraid of the pregnant woman's condition. Another respondent said that the clown figure's warning to Binda that he should not produce too many children affected him most. But, nevertheless, all of them said that the film as such had little or no effect on them, saying that the film was like a dream seen at night and lost now. Besides, according to one respondent, films are about 'other' people and not about the individual concerned and persuasion by using examples of someone else is ineffective.

All the men agreed that Binda had too many children. So the family was poor and the mother and children were weak and ill. However, all of them did not agree with the doctor that the stillborn child was due to the wife's repeated pregnancies. Two of the men disagreed with the doctor saying that what she said was not true in all cases and it was wrong to generalise, as they had seen many women in good health after having borne several children. The others agreed only vaguely. Therefore the credibility of the first argument of the film as expressed by the doctor was low.

But when the poverty and illness and disorderly condition of Binda's family was given as the reason for having less children, this was perceived, and found favour with four of the men, though one of them preferred not to space children but to have them in quick succession and then adopt a terminal method.

When questioned regarding what they would do themselves, the responses of the men were conditional. They said that they would have their wives consult the doctor only if the wife was ill and not for a normal pregnancy. With regard to letting her follow the doctor's advice, one man's answer was invalid as he did not perceive the advice, and one respondent's wife was already a user of loop. The other three men were

evasive, saying it was upto the wife to follow the doctor's advice; and she would do so if the doctor was good. Alternatively, they said that spacing should be practised, but the loop need not be used, because the loop could cause harm, and it was difficult to convince the women to adopt it.

So it would seem that credibility of the argument for having fewer children and spacing was high, of following the doctor's advice a little lower, and of using the loop, doubtful.

Supporting factors of credibility like attitude to characters, situation, and homophile evoked the following responses. There were fairly strong impressions and opinions expressed by the men regarding the condition of Binda's wife and family. There were many children, Binda was poor, could not feed them, the children were misbehaved, ill and weak, the wife was weak and ill, and too many children ruined her health. Two of them even said spontaneously that in conditions of poverty it was wrong to have so many children.

On the other hand, Razia and her husband, evoked mixed response from the men. They became critical. While most of them liked Razia, found her beautiful, clever and also approved of her relationship with her husband, and found them like "one of us", two found it strange that there was no work to do in Razia's house. One of them also said that though he liked them, he found their free behaviour towards each other objectionable and found it strange that they were living alone (no other family members). Also, most of them were indifferent or unsympathetic to Razia's reaction to her experience at Binda's house.

The attitude to the doctor was also of a mixed nature. Two of them criticised the doctor for frightening Razia. Three of the male respondents approved of the doctor, of Razia's visit to the doctor, and said they would call the doctor in times of such sickness as Binda's wife had, and if his wife were pregnant, would have her consult the doctor. One of them said he would call the doctor only after calling someone he knew from the village; another respondent said the doctor may be all right, but he did not trust the hospital and would consult a doctor depending on the individual doctor's competence. One respondent said that the doctor in the film had vested interests and wanted to frighten people into

adopting birth control methods. This was wrong. He had no faith in her; but in his own situation he would call a doctor, provided he had faith in that particular doctor. So, the credibility of the doctor shown in the film was not very high for the men even though faith in a doctor as such was.

The critical attitude exercised towards some aspects of the film became apparent again in the problem of homophile. All the male respondents except one, found the life style and dress of the characters in the film different from themselves and three found the language different from theirs. Some pointed out details such as "girls in our parts do not wear a burqa", or "it is not the custom for a man and wife to go out together", or "Razia and her husband live alone, I find that strange", or "there is no work to do in Razia's house, that is strange" or "the behaviour between husband and wife is too free and objectionable".

All the female respondents except one, said that the film had an effect on them, saying that they liked truths being shown; and the wise message that was put across. They were affected by the condition of Ganga, and felt fear on seeing it.

All of them agreed with the first argument that repeated pregnancies ruin the mother's health, but three of the women added that the stillbirth was also god's will. One respondent did not refer to the stillborn child at all. This argument was supported by their spontaneous response to Ganga's condition. The women mentioned her illness, the number of children and their condition, and said that so many children and their poverty made it difficult for them and the mother to be in good health. One of the women mentioned on her own that there should not be more than three children. And all the women were affected by, or afraid of, Ganga's condition.

Their agreement with the second argument was partial. They all approved of Razia visiting the doctor, saying that "it is good to visit the doctor in early pregnancy itself" or "the clever doctor tells her everything" or simply, that Razia was happy after her visit to the doctor. Nevertheless, though all the women agreed that spacing should be practised, the advice about the loop was not recalled by three of the women and did not find favour with the two who did recall it.

About themselves all the female respondents said that they would consult the doctor, one adding that she would do so if ill. Following the doctor's advice was made conditional by two women "if the doctor's advice is good, I will follow it" and two women said that if they advised the loop for spacing, they would not follow that part of the advice, but would like to practice spacing by some other method. One of these women explained her reason for not wishing to use the loop, saying that she had heard that it was harmful to health.

The credibility of the doctor was very high with all the women, who expressed their appreciation of her competence and knowledge. They all agreed that they would call her in such a situation as Ganga's, though two of them added that they would also call someone from their village for their satisfaction.

All the women felt sympathetic towards Ganga and were affected by her condition; they also realised the difficulty of a large family as depicted in the film.

There was unanimous approval of Razia, they "liked" her, found her beautiful and all the women remarked on the loving relationship between her and her husband and commended it. Two of them went further to comment that their life style and behaviour was natural and credible, and one woman remarked that her husband even took Razia out. Some of them mentioned that they liked Razia and her husband the most in the film, and next to them the doctor.

All the women remarked that the language spoken by the characters was different from their own. Three of them thought their clothes and life style was similar to their own while one woman said that the characters in the film seemed slightly 'better off' than themselves, while the other said that Binda's life style was similar to theirs but Razia's was urbanised. (This did not affect her approval or appreciation of Razia). All the women found the events universal. So, for the women, the film seemed to evoke an emotional response towards both the fearful and joyous elements, approval of characters, faith in the doctor and general agreement with all the arguments except the loop. The film had high credibility and evoked considerable involvement.

#### INTERPRETATION

The recall of both the men and women was very high, with a sequential reconstruction done by most respondents, the verbal messages were also remembered. This was unusual considering responses to other films. It is also unusual that there was not much difference in the recall between the men and women. To be noted also is the comprehension of flashback and flashforward. The flashback depicting Razia's reactions to her experience at Binda's house was comprehended by the women, while the flashforward, depicting Razia's imagination of her baby, towards the end of the film, was not comprehended. Perhaps usage of already used images as in the flashback made it more comprehensible. On the other hand it is more likely that the force of narrative in the middle of which the flashback was placed was responsible for making it more comprehensible.

Another remarkable factor was that almost all the respondents showed a high degree of involvement with the film. This was apparent from their attitude while answering questions, which was eager and definitive. It was also apparent from the way the men showed discrimination and a critical eye for detail, even if only to point out what they disliked or disapproved of.

This degree of involvement and a positive attitude to talking about the film was despite the men's saying the film had no effect on them or that the language of the film was different from theirs, or that they would have liked it better with song and dance. Amongst women, recall and involvement were high despite the reticence on the part of some of them to talking about the film, saying that they did not remember the film and that they were uneducated.

Nevertheless, it became apparent that the film had much more appeal for the women. Though the men had a high recall and, by a process of logical thinking, agreed with most of the arguments of the film, the women seemed to have been emotionally involved. They were spontaneous in their appreciation of Razia and her husband while being sympathetic to Binda and his family, and fearful of Ganga's condition.

There was also an almost unanimous appreciation of the doctor in the film, and she had a high credibility for the women.

This is not to say that the film was effective in the sense that it persuaded its audience to change its attitude or motivate action, but it provoked definite responses, discussion, and on the women, had an emotional effect. For the most part, it had high credibility for the women.

The responses to this film was also free of self-contradiction. The problems shown in the film were linked to family planning as a solution, and the arguments were perceived. If only spacing was acceptable and not the loop, it was not because the argument for it was invalid, but because the loop as a method was associated with bad experiences of the respondents or their acquaintances. In any case, the film did not emphasise the particular method, but recommended it for a particular patient, Razia. It implied suitability to the individual as a condition for its use. (The doctor says to Razia, "you can use the loop, in my opinion, it will suit you".) Correspondingly, the respondents' reactions were not hostile or evasive, but expressed apprehension about the loop, not entirely closing their minds to persuasion about it, provided they found their doctor satisfactory, or its use satisfactory. This response could be called positive as we are not at this point presuming on a film's capacity to cause attitudinal change or action but at least to be comprehended, to provoke involvement, to be considered seriously, to be credible and cause the audience to relate to it.

This kind of "positive" response, with high recall from men and women, fair credibility from all the respondents and a high degree of involvement was despite the usual negative factors, like an entertainment expectation of media on the part of the men, a critical attitude to factors of homophile, and a reticent attitude to being interviewed on the part of the women. It can be largely attributed to the nature of the film.

The film is a simply presented "story" film, using characters and dialogue, and a linear, temporal construction. This partly explains the degree of recall. When an achronological sequence is used within this flow, the force of narrative seems to make it comprehensible; when it is used outside it, it remains incomprehensible. At the same time the film was subtle, and did not obviously push its message but did it through its characters. The characters are projected strongly and are well-developed, not stereotyped. The film is carefully blended with a load of emotional undertones,

sustained throughout the film. The relationship between Razia and her husband, or the dramatic moments in Razia's experience in Ganga's house, or the effect on her later, all help to sustain it. This was borne out in recall also. The broken water pitcher, the screaming children, and the "love" between Razia and her husband were spontaneously mentioned. These emotional undertones and the strong characterisation caused not only high involvement, but in turn influenced recall favourably; as once there is involvement, the attention is sustained better.

The doctor is again well portrayed, involved once in the village situation and then in her own environment, the clinic. She is clear and sympathetic and at the same time, sufficiently different and removed from the villagers, in her manner and appearance, to give an impression of competence, and evoke respect. Except for one respondent, all the others reacted favourably to the doctor, especially the women.

The special appeal for the women as compared to the men, could be because the central character was a woman (Razia) who is projected strongly. And the overall good response could also be influenced by the fact that the central characters, Razia and her husband, belonged to the age group that our respondents could identify with, while the older couple, Binda and Ganga, was used as a counterpoint. Razia and her husband provided a focus for identification through whom the negative situation of Binda could be perceived.

The special appeal for the women perhaps also explains another feature of response. This film has Muslims for its central characters. Among the men, the only Hindu respondent had an unfavourable response. On the other hand, a Muslim man also had an unfavourable response to the film. Among the women, four were Hindus and one was Muslim. They all had a favourable response. So though there is nothing conclusive to prove that the sectarian aspect of the film had any influence on response patterns, on the other hand, there are definite indications that the central character, being a woman, and well projected, evoked a definite response pattern. The women reacted more positively than the men.

The argument of women's health and the poor condition of a large family carried validity and the method pushed was of spacing and not of terminating; this also found favour.

Only the specific method of the loop did not, and a couple of respondents, while agreeing with spacing, said there were methods other than the loop for that.

Factors of homophile had been critically observed by the men and therefore if they had more homophile with the film, it might have influenced them more.

Looking at the respondents' general attitude to family planning as expressed before they were interviewed about the film, and relating it to their response on seeing the film, there emerges an unusual pattern which indicates that the film made some difference to the respondents. To Man Singh, who was favourable to family planning, it made a negative difference. He resented the fear element employed in the film, mistrusted the doctor who made an example of the fearful situation, disagreed with the use of the loop and spacing as he favoured vasectomy, and finally made a remark that nothing can bring the Hindus and Muslims together.

The opinions of those who were generally favourable to family planning remained the same towards the film.

Those who were non committal or said they had no opinion were provoked to say something definite about family planning, which was favourable, even if conditional to not using a particular device like the loop, or to their own doctor giving them satisfactory advice.

Therefore, on the whole, Teen Saal Baad is a film that was effective in so far as it evoked involvement and definite responses, held attention and had a fair amount of credibility.

Man Singh is a 24 year old Hindu Jharkhand. He has 2 children surviving. His media contact is very limited, but he sees TV, Radio and 'avangar' occasionally. He has not been to the cinema or seen short films, not even any previous film shows.

On family planning he understands having only a few children. He did not, however, give his own opinion.

MAN SINGH is a 23 year old Hindu Chhatar. He has studied upto class four and has one daughter. His media contact is frequent. He has books read to him occasionally, sees TV, radio and dance, theatre and 'avangar' seven or eight times a year. He sees movies eight or ten times a year.

## TEEN GHARANEY

Teen Gharaney was shown on 3 January 1975 in Chaudhary Jai Pershad's house in Sultanpur village. The audience consisted of Hindu Sainis, Harijans, Khattris and Muslims.

The film has a theatrical format, with characters and dialogue, and is in an urban lower middle class setting. The theme is a comparison between two families, one of which is small and well off, the other is large, noisy and in shambles. These two families are neighbours of a newly married couple who have moved in near them. This couple, Mala and her husband, are the central characters of the film. There is dialogue throughout except for the last section when a voice-over is used to represent a conversation between a family planning worker and this couple. The film has general arguments for family planning.

Our respondents consist of 5 men (4 Hindu Chamars and 1 Hindu Jheemar, a lower caste) and 5 women (1 Hindu Saini, 2 Hindu Khattris 1 Hindu Jheemar, a lower caste, and 1 Hindu Chamar). The sample was all Hindu, as the audience consisted largely of Hindus, representative of Sultanpur village itself.

A brief description of the respondents is given below, stating their exposure to media and understanding of family planning and their general attitude in these respects.

ATRU is a 24 year old Hindu Jheemar. He has 2 children surviving. His media contact is very limited, but he sees drama, Ramlila and 'svaangs' occasionally. He has not been to the cinema or seen short films, not even our previous film shows.

By family planning he understands having only a few children. He did not, however, give his own opinion.

MAHENDRA SINGH is a 23 year old Hindu Chamar. He has studied upto class four and has one daughter. His media contact is frequent. He has books read to him occasionally, sees drama, song and dance, tamasha and 'svaangs' seven or eight times a year. He sees movies eight or ten times a year. He has

seen short films as well, but does not like them, because he says they are useless and does not concern him.

By family planning he understands having only a few children, but does not give his own opinion. He said 'what opinion can I give'.

LEELA is a 30 year old Hindu Chamar. He has no education and has two sons and two daughters.

His media contact is very limited, but he manages to see dramas four or five times a year. He has seen short films and likes them but does not say why.

He understands by family planning that it has to do with children. He is not clear and gives no opinion.

SHOBHA RAM is a 23 year old Hindu Chamar. He has studied upto class eight and has no children.

His media contact is ordinary. He seldom reads books and newspapers, but sees 'svaang' and dramas occasionally, through the year. He sees movies two to four times a year. He has seen some short films and likes them because one gains knowledge from them, sees all kinds of things in them.

By family planning he understands having fewer children through 'medical interference'. He did not however give his own opinion except that he would not practice it at the moment, as he did not have any children.

RAMPAL is a 25 year old Hindu Chamar. He has studied upto class eight and has no child.

His media contact is frequent. He reads newspapers and books off and on, sees dramas four to six times a year, and movies ten to twelve times a year. He has seen short films as well, and likes them because they are educational.

By family planning he understands increasing the family only after careful thought. One should not have too many children. He does not say clearly, however, what his opinion is. The interviewers felt that most of the men were unwilling to reveal their actual feelings as they were afraid of the motives of the interviewer.

OMA is a 25 year old Hindu Jheemar. She has one son and one daughter.

She does not have any media contact; once in a while, may be she hears the newspaper or a magazine being read aloud. She has seen Ramlila and 'svaang' a year ago. She does not go to the movies. She has seen some films on farming. She likes short films because they show things connected with farming.

By family planning she understands having only a few children. She agrees with it in principle. She said that she had two children herself and bringing them up was difficult; if there were more, how would he be able to provide for their food.

VEDRANI is a 20 year old Hindu Arora. She has studied upto class eight and has no child.

Her media contact is good. She reads the newspapers and periodicals three or four times a week. She sees Ramlila and dramas twice or thrice a year. She goes to the movies once or twice a year. She has not seen short films, nor our previous film shows.

By family planning she understands using some method to keep the number of children down. Her own opinion is that one should have only two children. These are times of inflation and it is not possible to get by with many children. If there are only a few children their food, clothing, and other needs can be attended to.

SANTOSH, wife of Sohan, is a 22 year old Hindu Arora. She has studied upto the class eleven and has no child.

Her media contact is frequent. She reads story-books. She has seen Ramlila, but that was two years ago. She has not seen short films.

By family planning she understands having fewer children. She also would like to have only two children, so that everything about them can be attended to. In times of inflation it becomes impossible to feed the children properly, what to say of their comforts.

KAMALA is a 24 year old Hindu Saini. She has no education and has one son.

She has low media contact. She has seen Ramlila two years ago, manages to see a film a year. She has seen short films and likes them because they show moving pictures, and also some useful things like ploughing and farming.

By family planning she understands having only a few children. She too thinks that one should have only a few children, as many as one can afford. If there are only two or three children, expenses will be less and all the children can be attended to.

SANTOSH, wife of Shobha Ram, is a 19 year old Hindu Chamar. She has no education and has no children.

Her media contact is very limited. She has seen Ramlila a year ago, and sees films once or twice a year. She has not seen any short films.

By family planning she understands having only a few children. Her own opinion is that the number of children should correspond to one's income. In these times of inflation one cannot get by if one has too many children. Many children can neither be fed, nor clothed, nor educated.

#### ANALYSIS

Most of the men liked the film for its entertainment value, saying that it was fun, though one man said that he liked it as it showed an older woman advising family planning, and this unfortunately does not happen in his village. None of them questioned the credibility of the medium as such and found the characters true to life.

One of the men said that the language was a little different and he could not follow it, and one man said that he "did not know" if he followed the language. The rest found the language familiar, though they distinguished it as urban language, and one respondent said, "every film has the same language".

Four of the men said that the film was about family planning and one even said that it was about "having less children so that their education was good". But one man, though his recall was good, said that the film is not about anything, "we see it for diversion". This reflected his attitude, whether he chose to receive or reject a message, rather than

his comprehension. Except for one man, the others did not recount the story. When asked to do so, they merely mentioned either the message of the film, or mentioned the family planning clinic where the doctor advises the newly married couple regarding their family size.

Despite not being able to recount the film's events sequentially, the recall was very high, covering all events that took place. The exception was the visit of the astrologer at the end, which was not remembered by only two of them. In this film even the spoken words were generally remembered, like what exactly the astrologer said in the beginning, what the husband told Mala about the two families, what the older woman told Mala, and so on.

The exception here was what the couple is told at the family planning clinic. Though most men remembered that they were shown posters and pictures on family planning, and that a family planning worker was there, they did not recall what was said. The two who recalled did so vaguely. None of the men remembered that when Mala and her husband came home from the clinic they mutually agreed to have only one son and one daughter. What was mainly remembered was the astrologer, and about the two families, that the small one was happy and the children were educated while in the big family, the household was dirty and disorderly and the children gave a lot of trouble. Two of them said that the poverty was due to the large number of children as both the families received the same income. They also remembered that when Mala visits the large family, she did not even have a place to sit; while she was treated hospitably by the mother in the small family, and was served tea and given good advice.

Only one of the respondents was non committal about recall, saying that he did not "know so much" to most things, though he also mentioned the astrologer in detail. His impression of the big family was that "they were poor like us". His attitude to the film and to family planning was negative and the recall might not have been really poor but only reflect his unwillingness to answer questions on this subject.

All the women said that they liked the film and mentioned that they liked the girl, Mala, very much and some of them mentioned their liking the small family. None of the women questioned the credibility of the medium and found the

characters true to life. They all said that they found the language clear.

The recall of the women was much the same as the men, except that two of them did not even remember that Mala went to the family planning clinic. Nor could they recall what the older woman advised Mala, or what was she was advised at the clinic. On the other hand, three of the women remembered the effect on Mala of her visit to the clinic, saying "they, Mala and her husband, agreed that they should have one son like him and one daughter like her".

The high recall among the women was despite a couple of them saying, "I do not know its message. I just saw the film. I am not educated" or "very little of what I saw remains in my mind". This was only initial reticence to answering questions.

The effect on some of the men was one of enjoyment and fun while a couple of them said that they liked the idea of an older woman giving advice about family planning. Some of them also seemed to delight in the idea that the young couple did not fall into the clutches of the astrologer. In fact, the comic element in the large family and the defeat of the money seeking astrologer seemed to have mainly affected the men.

Nevertheless, three of the men agreed with the advice of family planning given to Mala by the mother of the small family, and with the advice given at the family planning clinic. They also said that a small family is happy and can be well looked after, whereas a big family, unless they have a lot of money, will not be happy. Therefore, three male respondents agreed with the arguments in the film for family planning. One of them did not recall the advice on family planning given either by the older woman or at the clinic, and also said that it was not necessary that a large family be unhappy. It depends from family to family. The fifth man was against family planning and did not agree with the arguments of the film, saying that he had no land, and the more children he had the more hands there would be to earn money for the family.

Though all the men approved of Mala's adopting family planning, only those men who agreed with the argument in the film said that they would themselves like to adopt it, and they gave reasons of financial difficulties if they had a large family. Nevertheless, one of them qualified his desire to adopt family

planning by saying that liking apart, it would be easier if adoption of family planning was made into a law. Of the two men who disagreed with the argument of the film, one said outright that he would not adopt family planning the other said that having had four children, it was too late now, and he was afraid of having himself vasectomised as normally one had to bribe the hospital authorities, or else they would spoil the operation. He had heard of the bad experiences of his neighbours.

Supporting factors to argument were homophile and appeal of characters. The portrayal of the astrologer delighted most of the men and they were happy with the young couple for chasing him away. They all generally liked the young couple, and two of them even said that with humour, one can say many truths and yet not hurt anyone. Two men said that the environment and people were urban. Those who were favourable to the film also said that the events are universal, even though one of them said that the environment is urban, and the other found it unfamiliar. The other two did not know if the events were universal and possible in their environment, which was dissimilar.

On the women it was not only the entertainment aspect that had effect, though all of them said that "I was happy on seeing it", and sometimes added "I told everyone what I saw". But three of the women mentioned that what affected them was the portrayal that a small family will bring happiness and in a big family there will be less happiness.

Those who claimed that the film had an effect on them also remembered the advice that the mother of the small family gave to Mala, and agreed with it, saying that the number of children should be small as financially it becomes difficult otherwise. Two of them who recalled the conversation at the clinic, also generally agreed with the family planning worker's advice on having fewer children, though they did not remember the reasons given on any other details.

But all the women agreed that a small family is happier than a large one, though sometimes it depended on fate, but there were few large families that were happy. Nevertheless, a small family can be looked after in terms of food, clothing, and education. These days, not only has education become very necessary, but living has also become costlier. One of them also said that too many children ruined a woman's health.

All the women uniformly said that they would like to adopt family planning like Mala so that they could have fewer children, and look after themselves and the children with more care and attention.

The women liked the newly wed couple the most, and two of them remarked that it was good that they thought of family planning right at the start of their married life. Though three of the women found the film's language different from that of their village, most of them found the events universal and credible as they pointed out that there were families like the large family in the film in Sultanpur itself.

So, the film had high credibility for the women, their attitude to the film having been more serious than the men. While the men enjoyed the comedy and delighted in the astrologer's predicament, the women gave more attention to the message and the central characters - the newly wed couple.

#### INTERPRETATION

There was not much difference in the response of the men and women to this film except that the men were less serious than the women and this showed both in their recall and credibility towards the film.

The respondents to this film were from Sultanpur, which is a large village, in fact a "kasbah" with an Inter College, a Mother-Child Health Centre which has an Auxilliary Nurse Midwife stationed there, as well as a family planning male worker. The respondents were generally more exposed, and those in our sample, had a clearer attitude in favour of family planning and a wider media contact. Some of the women were educated upto class eight.

Since it was the first time interviews were conducted in this village, we had evasive replies from the men regarding their opinion on family planning, as they did not know the interviewers' motives for questioning them. According to the interviewers, their initial response should be discounted as their later and favourable response represented their actual feeling.

These "host" factors in the audience along with the nature

of the film itself, perhaps explains the high recall and credibility for this film. The film presents a story, with dialogue and characters, and its incidents are quite simple. As is noticeable, where dialogue is replaced by voice-over as in the clinic sequence, there is a general drop in recall.

Besides, the entertaining and comic nature of the film is not only involving, and holds the attention, but also has another function to perform. As one of the respondents himself pointed out, "in fun, one can say many truths and yet not hurt anyone". This disguise or approach, was probably a way of not trampling on anyone's feelings and was effective to that extent. And the audience was on its own able to read the facts below the fun. On the other hand, the comic element also served as a diversion and escape from specific issues, and this was reinforced by the general nature of the message in the film; no particular method, no particular argument, just a general statement about the advisability of family planning, put across in an entertaining way. And this was acceptable to all except one of the respondents.

The film was projecting itself through women, Mala a young woman, and an older woman in the small family. This could be one of the reasons why the women took it more seriously than the men, even though they enjoyed it as much as the men. The women even drew comparisons between the situations shown in the large family in the film and some families in their own knowledge. Teen Gharaney appealed to the women more and for a general message seemed quite adequate.

## ACTUAL EXPERIENCE

### DESCRIPTION

Actual Experience was shown on 8 January 1975 to a female audience in Sultanpur in Chaudhury Jai Pershad's house. The audience consisted mainly of Hindu Sainis, Harijans, Khatris, Brahmans and Muslims. The men seemed uninterested and left the show. Therefore a second show for a male audience was held on 22 January also in Sultanpur, at Santosh's mill, where the audience consisted largely of Muslims and Hindu Sainis and Khatris. For interviewing, there were a large number of refusals from the members of the audience and therefore we have respondents who are nonrepresentative of the audience for that show.

Actual Experience is a series of interviews mainly with users of the loop conducted by the director of the film or by women in different locations, sometimes in a clinic, sometimes in the interviewee's house. The interviewer is sometimes visually established, sometimes only by an off-screen voice. At times the interviewer's presence continues throughout the particular interview, sometimes only the interviewee is seen and heard. The interviews, though they start off with synchronous sound, often go onto using only a voice-over and combine it with related visuals, not always of the actual people being interviewed.

The subject of conversation is strictly restricted to the loop, why they use the loop, for how long they have used it, what are the problems they have had on account of it, are they continuing to use it and for how long they will do so. There are a few interviews with those who are not users, or have been past users, of the loop. A lady doctor, speaking in Hindi, appears a couple of times, speaking to the audience about her experience with her patients who have used the Loop. The film uses many languages - Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati and English.

Our respondents for this film consisted of 5 men (3 Muslim Gadas, 1 Rajput and 1 Hindu Harijan) and 5 women, (All Hindu 1 Khatri, 2 Brahmans, 1 Dhobi and 1 Saini). A brief description of the respondents is given stating their exposure to media and understanding of family planning and their general attitude in these respects.

IRFAN AHMAD, a Muslim Gada, is 22 years old and has one daughter. He has been educated upto class eight.

His media contact is good, and he has participated in dramas. He sees dramas and other shows about four times a year, and about fifty films in a year. He has seen short films as well, which he likes because they show new methods of farming.

By family planning he understands limiting the size of the family so as to improve the conditions of the household. It is cheaper and he thinks that the more people practise it the better it is.

MOHAMMAD AFJAL, a Muslim Rajput, is 22 years old and has a son and a daughter. He has studied upto class five.

His media contact is limited, though he manages to see dramas and 'svaang' about ten times a year, and films thirty to forty times a year. He has seen short films, and likes them as they explain things about farming.

He knows that family planning limits childbirth, and can be used to space out children. His own opinion is that one should not have children in quick succession, and so he uses family planning methods himself.

MOLHAR SINGH, a Hindu Harijan, is 27-28 years old. He has two sons and two daughters. He has studied upto class eleven.

His media contact is good. He sees dramas 50 to 60 times, and films "about a hundred times a year". He has seen short films and likes them as they give information about agricultural production. By family planning he understands that one should have only a few children. With a few children, the household expenses will also be small.

IRFAN, a twenty year old Muslim Gada, has no children.

His media contact is good. He sees dramas, tamasha, and 'svaang' ten or twelve times a year, and sees films 48 times in a year. He has seen short films as well, which he likes because they show songs, actors and other "nice things".

By family planning he understands having only a few children and agrees with it in principle.

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YUNUS, who is 20-21 years old, is a Muslim Gada, who has two daughters. He has studied upto class eight.

His media contact is normal. He manages to see 8 or 10 'svaang' or dramas in a year and about 20 films. He has seen short films as well and likes them because they explain things about farming.

By family planning he understands limiting one's family to two or three children.

KRISHNA, a Hindu Khatri is about 25-30 years old and has four children.

Her media contact is very limited, but she has seen Ramlila and dramas.

By family planning she understands that it is best to have a small family, and few children. She approves of it as with more children the expenses also increase.

RAKSHA, a 19 year old Hindu Brahman has studied upto class five and has no children.

Her media contact is limited, but she manages to see Ramlila or a song and dance show once or twice a year. She has not seen films.

By family planning she understands having only a few children. For herself she would like only two, as it is impossible to support larger families these days.

PUSHPA, a Hindu Brahman, is 17 years old and has no children. She has studied upto class five.

Her media contact is limited, but she manages to see Ramlila, dramas, and song and dance shows once or twice a year. She has not seen films.

By family planning she understands having only a few children, and she agrees with the idea, for in these times of inflation it is not possible to get by easily.

KELA, a 17 year old Hindu Dhobi, has studied upto class eight and has no children.

Her media contact is limited. She manages to see 'svaang', dramas and Ramlila once or twice a year and a film annually. She has seen short films as well, and liked them because they show all manner of things - like cutting grass, winnowing, transplanting, and sowing.

By family planning she understands having fewer children, and thinks that in these times of inflation one ought to have only a few children, or the expenses are too large.

ROSHNI, a Hindu Saini, is 20-21 years old and has a daughter.

Her media contact is limited but she has seen Ramlila, 'svaang' puppet shows and dance drama, she does not see films.

By family planning she understands having only a few children. For herself, she thinks one ought to have only two or three children as the expenses increase and the children are a bother.

#### ANALYSIS

Though most of the men said that they liked the film, claiming that they did so because they approved of the family planning message in it, many of the men did not find it credible. Though most of them understood the interview situations, one of them said that though the people are real, the situations are artificial. Another said, "they are like actors, like in any other film" and another said, "it is not a drama, but I could not identify with the people, they were some other people". Regarding the language, they realised that there were several languages, some of which were unfamiliar to them. They could follow Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, and one could partly understand Marathi. But only one of them said that from the way of speech, they could tell what the interviewees were saying; the others admitted that many parts of the film were unintelligible to them.

Nevertheless, four of the men said that though they had heard of the loop earlier, on seeing the film, they had a clearer confirmation of the loop as a contraceptive device for women. Two of them further said that they realised that it was not necessarily harmful to one's health. Only one man said that he gained no knowledge at all from the film

nor did he know anything about the loop prior to seeing the film.

The recall of most men was confused. Two of them remembered nothing at all except that people in the film were talking about "less children" and the loop. The three, who had some recall, remembered the "Lala" with 12 children shown in the beginning of the film and that he was a non-acceptor; the Muslim woman who was shown in a village environment, talking of her house, her work, her children and that she used the loop and would like to continue doing so; the Burkha clad woman who said that even if she had cancer, she would continue to use the loop; and the woman in salwar kameej talking to a doctor about her experience with the loop. They did not remember what she said. All of the men remembered the doctor as having appeared three or four times but some of them said that her voice could be heard throughout the film. Only one of the men remembered anything of what she said - that the loop could be removed without harm if it did not suit the patient.

Generally, it was felt that more of the women were in favour of the loop and were happy using it. Two of the men specifically said that their impression after seeing all the women was that there was no harm in the loop though many people in their village feared the loop, and that if there was trouble, the doctor should be reported to and would attend to it. In disfavour of the loop, only one man mentioned that cancer and weakness were mentioned by one of the women as reasons for not using the loop.

Very little of the specifics of the film was remembered; there was only a general impression that there were more women in the film who were in favour of the loop and some remembered that the doctor advised the loop and assured that it was safe.

The women's reaction to the film was itself questionable as many of them were nonserious throughout the interview. They said that they liked the film, and that they found the characters real, though they did not exactly understand the interview situation, and thought that the women were talking to each other and the doctor. Regarding the language, they said that they understood some of it, as there were several languages spoken.

Some of them said that they knew that the loop was to prevent pregnancy, and others said that they had merely heard of the loop and knew nothing about it. All the women said that they did not learn anything about the loop after seeing the film.

Most of the women knew the film was about the loop. Two of them mentioned the "Lala" with 12 children, all of them remembered the Muslim woman in her house, doing her work at the grindstone and talking to the doctor in the clinic, and two remembered the Burkha clad woman who said she would use the loop even if she had cancer. Only one woman, remembered Mrs Mehra with her large house and one woman recalled that an interviewee had said that the loop had caused her increased menstrual bleeding and stomach ache. Of these only two women remarked that the woman at the grindstone said that she used the loop, initially she had trouble, and later it settled down. What the others said was not recalled. The doctor's appearance was recalled and here it was remembered by three of the women that the doctor said that if there was any trouble with the loop, it could be removed or could be treated by the doctor to settle the trouble.

The women were more specific in their recall, as they mentioned about the women that most of them used the loop; it suited some, some had trouble which got cured, and some it did not suit at all. On the whole, two of them felt more of the women in the film were in favour of the loop, while the others had a confused impression, one woman saying that there were more people against the loop.

Of the men, two of them said that the film's effect on them was because the film depicted the advisability of the loop to prevent having a large family. Two of them were vague, while one said that the effect on him was that vasectomy should be adopted. The last was mentioned by a man who throughout associated this film with vasectomy and seemed either totally confused or just out to show that he approved of vasectomy.

The men agreed with the women in the film who were in favour of the loop, trusted their commending the loop as well as the doctor's advice to use it, and said that their opinion regarding the loop was favourable, and they would advise others to use it. Their reasons were that a large family

should be avoided. One of the men said also that a loop could be used when desired and removed when not necessary. One considered it a better alternative to vasectomy. Out of all the men who claimed to be convinced about the loop, two respondents had to be discounted, as one had no recall of the film and the other confused the whole film as being associated with vasectomy. Moreover, the attitude of both these men was to please the interviewer. Also, it must be mentioned that except for one of the male respondents, the others were not very positive in their agreement with or their credibility for, the film. The answers were given for the sake of answering, not because of the film's effect or any conviction. Also most of the women said that the women in the film were dissimilar to those in the village. They were better off, and they desired less children, unlike themselves. The problems of the women in the film were considered by most men to be dissimilar to those of their village women.

The film did not seem to have any effect on the women. Two of them said as much, saying that they learnt something about the loop, but were not affected by it. Two of the women said that it had an effect on them, but they were laughing and nonserious throughout the interview, and therefore had to be discounted. Another woman talked vaguely of agreeing with the idea of fewer children but her answer had no relevance to the content of the film.

None of the characters had any particular appeal for the women, nor did they agree definitely with the doctor's advice. Regarding the interviews in the film, they said that some were in favour of the loop and some were against it. They all stressed that for those whom it suited it was all right, but it caused harm to those it did not suit. Though most of them said that they had faith in the doctor and what she said in the film, generally the film did not seem to have done anything for them. Their responses to most questions were vague, the only thing they had to say definitely about the loop was that it depended on each one's condition and if it suited them, well and good, otherwise it was to be avoided. This was reflected also in their reply to the question of whether they would themselves adopt the loop. The women said they did not feel anything after seeing the film and this was consistent with their non-committal response. For them, the film did not dispel any fears regarding the loop. Only one woman, though generally reacting like others, was a little more responsive to the film, had comparatively more definite answers to give

in terms of having faith in the doctor or perceiving that more interviewees in the film found the loop suitable and believed in them. Regarding herself she said that she would use the loop if it suited her. Most of the women found the interviewees in the film familiar, though not similar to them, and one said that they were like the female interviewer of this film study. Two of them said that they found the doctor and her advice strange - that she should be advising them to have less children. They felt the problems faced by those women regarding their family and children's problems were similar to their own.

What was peculiar in the response to this film was the amount of information given by the respondents that was extraneous to the film - information that was not in the film at all. One of the men said that the film talked of vasectomy and that was the outstanding feature in it; similarly another man said that the film advised that those who feared an operation could adopt the loop as an alternative, whereas the film did not talk of vasectomy at all. And neither of these men were succumbing to confusion in terminology - using vasectomy to mean family planning - as they had differentiated the methods in their earlier answers. There was further information extraneous to the film like "when there is no cleanliness, then illness occurs on using the loop" and "health is the reason for using the loop", or that "men and women can protect their life with the loop". A couple of the men also said that the voice of the doctor who appeared on the screen, could be heard throughout the film.

Among the women, extraneous information came mainly regarding the troubles of a large family. One woman claimed that the film showed a woman with a lot of land and that she talked of how it would have to be divided; and that she was bathing her children as she talked. Another woman claimed that the film showed that the more children there were, the more trouble there was - there was cleaning to do and more clothes had to be stitched.

All this information was not contained in the film at all, either visually or verbally.

#### INTERPRETATION

The interview situation which was being presented in the film

to show "actual experience" of various people did not come across most of the time. The attempt to make the loop specially credible by this device was a failure. The reason was that the women did not make any difference between an ordinary film and this film as they had no conception of either. Among the men, though some of them may have understood the "actuality" of the film, they were either not willing to accept it as actuality, questioning its genuineness, or they thought the impression of actuality was conveyed by actors, staging the film for the benefit of the audience.

The second problem was the loop itself. The experience of the women in this area with the loop has been unsatisfactory, and this film could not counter this discontent and fear. The men were not particularly interested in the loop as it was for women and could not find identity with them, and therefore had a low level of involvement. Though their answers seemed favourable, their overall attitude was not a definite one. The women on the other hand had some interest, could remember details but were not convinced by the film.

The variety of languages in the film also posed a problem. Prone to ignore the spoken words in a film, coping with breaks in attention due to unintelligibility of the language left an overall feeling of confusion and distraction among the respondents and contributed to their taking it less seriously. Perhaps it also accounted for the imaginary information given by the respondents about the film's content. This also reflected the respondent's anxiety to answer questions for the sake of answering them, not because they absorbed the film. People from so many dissimilar regions caused difficulty in identification.

On the whole, the impression was that this film did not do anything for the respondents, and left them uninvolved, and confused and gave no clue to them regarding the pros and cons of the loop nor impressed on them the credibility of the various viewpoints and experiences shown in the film.

It is not possible to assess the film's response to the respondents' prior attitude to the loop, as most of the male respondents expressed attitudes, could not be relied upon. The men were inconsistent, not frank and too apprehensive to be open; and the women were non-serious.

## HANDS

### DESCRIPTION

The film Hands was shown in Patni on 22 January 1975, in the Harijan basti at Phullo's house. The audience for this film comprised mainly of Chamars, Sainis and Muslim Telis.

Hands is non sequentially structured like an essay film and does not follow any story line. It has no commentary, dialogue or narration. The only spoken words are at the end saying "stop it" in Hindi and in English. The soundtrack consists only of music. The film shows all actions emphasising the hands and generally avoiding other things in the camera compositions. The film which is in colour begins with youthful hands, then shots depicting employment, love and marriage, and the birth of a baby. From here it changes to an apparently random juxtaposition of grim shots in black and white. Rural and urban environments are mixed throughout. These two sections are followed by a montage of shots drawn from these sections as well as new shots, finally ending with several shots of innumerable hands with the words "stop it" on the soundtrack.

This film was shown without its family planning message symbolised by the red triangle which appeared at the end of the film. This was done to obtain an unbiased comprehension of the film and its argument, and to see its credibility on its own. The idea was also to find out what solution the audience would give, without family planning being suggested as the answer, to the problem presented in the film.

This could be done in the above film as the direct message came only at the end, though images which are now stereotypes in family planning films were used in the body of the film.

According to the producer, the argument presented was one of unemployment and population explosion, and family planning as an important practise under these circumstances.

The respondents for this film included 5 men (2 Hindu Harijans,

1 Muslim Lohar and 2 Muslim Telis) and 5 women (4 Hindu Harijans and 1 Muslim Teli). A brief description of the respondents follows, stating their media exposure, their knowledge and attitude towards family planning prior to seeing the film, and their general socio-economic background.

JAISINGH, aged 22 years is a Harijan. He can sign his name but is otherwise illiterate. He has no children.

His media contact is limited, though he sees "tamasha" or "svaang" twice or thrice a year, and goes to the cinema 5 or 6 times in a year. He had seen one of our previous film shows "Years of Promise".

By family planning he understands that a small family is a happy family, but when asked for his own opinions, says,  
ज्यादा परिवार में लोगों है। हमारी क्या राय हो सके

SIMRU, aged 24-25 years, is a Harijan Chamar and has no children.

His exposure to nontraditional media is limited to seeing films once a year, and to traditional media, seeing a drama once in a year. He has seen short films on agriculture which he likes for their information content. He had seen one of our previous film shows "Years of Promise".

He says that he knows what is meant by family planning, but it becomes useful only if people accept it. He approves of it.

SALIM, 19 years old, is a Muslim Lohar and has studied upto class eleven. He has no children.

His media contact is limited to seeing "svaang" once or twice a year and visiting the cinema 10-12 times a year. He has seen short films on agriculture which he likes for their information value.

By family planning he understands having fewer children, but was non committal when asked for his own opinion. He merely says, ठीक है सब। जैसा जिसके समझ हो

KALOO, 35 years old, is a Muslim Teli and has one son.

His exposure to media is nil, except that he sees 'svaang',

and a qawwali four or five times a year.

By family planning he understands having fewer children and undergoing vasectomy. He does not say what his opinion is.

SAYEED, 25 years old, is a Muslim Teli, has studied upto class seven and has no children.

His exposure to media both traditional and nontraditional is frequent. He listens to the radio frequently. He sees dramas and 'svaang' 10 times in a year and goes to the cinema 25 times a year. He has seen short films on agriculture and likes them for their information value. He has seen all our previous film shows.

By family planning he understands limiting family size by adopting vasectomy and says that there is greater happiness in having fewer children -- he approves of it but adds,

कोई रास्ता क्या दे सकता है।

SOMTI, 25 years old, is a Harijan, and has no children.

Her media contact is limited, but she manages to see Ramlila, 'svaang' and drama once or twice in a year. Though she never visits the cinema, she has seen short films on agriculture which she says she likes because, being unable to go out anywhere, she can see the world.

By family planning she understands having fewer children. She goes on to say that she has no children at the moment, so what opinion can she have. But she does know that in these days of high prices, one cannot afford to have too many children, for someone will have clothes to wear while some won't have anything.

NORATEE, 20 years old, is a Chamar, and has no children. Her media contact is limited though she does see Ramlila, 'svaang' and drama twice or thrice in a year. She has seen short films on agriculture and likes them as the farmers can learn something.

By family planning she understands having fewer children. She feels that too many children create problems and says that in her house the income is also low, so how can she afford to have several children.

SANTOSHI, aged 18 years, is a Chamar and has no children. Her media contact is limited to seeing Ramlila, "svaang" and drama one or twice a year. She goes to the cinema once in a year, and has not seen any short films. By family planning she understands having fewer children, and says that there should be fewer children, because in these days of high prices one cannot afford to have too many children.

BISHAMBARI, 19 years old, is a Chamar and has one son. Her media contact is limited to seeing Ramlila, 'svaang' and dance shows once or twice in a year. She never visits the cinema but she has seen short films which she likes because they show moving pictures of various places.

By family planning she understands having fewer children; but the future, she says, depends on god's will. If he gives more children, she has no choice, but considering the present times she wishes to have fewer children.

NOORLAHI, aged 20 years, is a Muslim Teli and has no children. Her media contact is limited, but she sees song and dance and puppet shows once or twice in a year. She has seen short films and likes them for their information value. By family planning she understands having fewer children; and her opinion is that in these days one cannot afford too many children, but there should be at least one or two.

#### ANALYSIS

An analysis of the data revealed that four out of the five male respondents liked the film. One of them liked it because it showed what was happening in the country these days. One of them liked the film because it recommended having fewer children, and two of them liked it because they felt men should learn about work from it. One male respondent was emphatic in his dislike of the film, because in the film people could not even get "rotis". Two men mentioned that they disliked the depiction of a man being operated, but one of them added that perhaps it had to be shown.

Again four of the male respondents knew that no one spoke in the film, of whom two also said that there was no commentary. One man added that people of the village liked

seeing moving images and listening to songs, and that making films without dialogue or commentary was harmful. He felt that along with the music, someone should have explained what was happening, and said that such films are made, बोलती फिल्में जनती हैं। One man mentioned that films without dialogue had both advantages and disadvantages, in the sense that people should be told what the various options are and what course of action they should follow, and the advantage is that man should be able to comprehend things without being actually told. One male respondent categorically stated that a film in which no one spoke could have no advantages, because only if someone speaks can one understand anything.

While two of the men said that the film was about family planning, one said it was about various occupations, one said it was about हाथ की सफाई! meaning perhaps that man should use his hands skilfully, and one respondent did not know what the film was about. Again two of them said that the moral of the film was to have a small family and be happy and one of them said that family planning was indicated in the shot showing children being born every 15 seconds, and in the shot of the "starving growing population". Two male respondents said that the message in the film was that man should use his hands skilfully and one said that one should fear god's wrath.

While three of the male respondents said that they had no difficulty in understanding the film, one said that the film was all right but he could not understand some of the things like why people were standing with wire in their hands and why women were beating their heads against the wall. One respondent said that he did not understand the film.

Two male respondents had a recall of the events shown in the film, two were somewhat confused and one said that asking questions on the film was बेमतलब की बात. Four men recalled the shot where the man was engaged in ploughing, and milking the cow, and while they did not know what these signified, one said that it was a lesson on farming, teaching people how to increase their output. Except for Kalu whose overall recall was poor the others remembered the opening shot of a baby and its hands; again four men recalled the shot of hands with books, but each one gave a different interpretation. One said that it meant that if there were two or three children

they could be educated properly, one merely said that someone was reading and one was unable to give it any meaning at all. Though all the men recalled the shots of the different kinds of machines that were shown, except for two men, one of whom said that these shots meant that each one should do his work well, and the other that one should work as in the film, the others had no idea what they were supposed to mean. Only two of them recalled the scene of the boy and the girl sitting on the beach. While one said that they were worshipping the river, the other said that they were talking to each other.

One respondent recalled the Hindu wedding as also the Nikah, two recalled only the Hindu wedding, one recalled a Christian and Hindu wedding and one could not recall any one of them. On their own none of them could recall what happened after that, but with the help of the interviewer three of the men recalled the shot of the calendar, of which one said that only an educated person could tell the meaning, and said that it was to enable one to know the date; and one recalled the leaves being torn, but did not know what was signified.

On being questioned about the two reddened hands that were shown and what they meant, three respondents said that they did not remember, one said, that it was a wedding, and the other that, *सब बेकार की बातें हैं।*

Only two respondents mentioned the change in the film after this, mentioning scenes of hungry people and parched earth, pickpockets, beggary and starvation. One man said that these shots must have meant something, but being a villager who was not so well read, he could not understand things until someone told him. This is significant, as this particular respondent has studied upto class eleven, and he too found it difficult to follow this film which had neither dialogue nor commentary. The other man interpreted these shots as meaning that without hands we would be able to do no work.

Three men recalled the end of the film. One of them said there was someone saying *देख देख* meaning look that side, see how much evil there is and then stop it. To one man the numerous hands shown in the end meant that a single piece of roti was being passed from hand to hand, and the third respondent said that he saw numerous hands towards the end but did not hear the voices.

What stands out is that the general involvement of the men to the film was casual; what was uniformly remembered were scenes of ploughing or milking of the cow, the different types of machines, the opening shot of the child and the Hindu wedding. This pattern was perhaps dictated by the familiarity of these images to their own situations; but comprehension was generally low.

All the female respondents said that they liked the film. Three of them liked it because they said they could see the whole world in it and all kinds of things were shown, like a farmer ploughing and milking a cow, men working at machines and a potter making vessels. Two of them said that there must be something beneficial in the film and that is why it was being shown, and one of them added that she liked it particularly because it was in colour.

All the female respondents knew that there was no dialogue in the film and two of them also said that there was no commentary. One of the women said that she liked our earlier films more as in this film no one spoke.

Four of the female respondents said that they did not know what the film was about, while one of them said that all kinds of work was shown in it. Again four of them did not know what the message of the film was.. Though they all said that the film was " ~~बुरा~~ ", one woman said that she could not understand much of it because there were too many people in it, one said that she did not understand it at all and one said that she liked the earlier film better.

Though none of them knew what the film was about, the overall recall of the female respondents was coherent, though three of them found it difficult to recall the shots in their sequential order.

When asked to recall some of the shots in the film, all the women remembered the shot of a man ploughing and a cow being milked; three women recalled the potter making earthen pots; two recalled the scene of two children being born and that a woman was distributing a piece of roti to her children; only one woman could remember, without assistance from the interviewer, the shots of people working on different machines. Two mentioned a woman getting married, and one woman mentioned the boy and girl sitting by the seashore, and "being loving".

However, the respondents did not appear to be very clear about what these images actually meant. Whereas two of them said that the images meant to show the various things that were happening in the world today, one woman merely said, मतलब ये था कि दुनिया फिल्म को देखे and one respondent felt that people should imitate what was shown in the film. One woman did not venture to say anything as to what the images meant.

Though all the female respondents remembered the opening shot of a child and its hands, and four of them also recalled that books were shown, none of them knew what they signified. While one woman said about these shots that, अजी कहे मतलब होगा; one said that books were shown to suggest that children should read them and become good people; one merely said that people should see all these things, another respondent said that she was not educated and does not remember much, but though that these shots meant that a child should grow up and study; one respondent said that the shot of the child and books were shown so that children should study and not throw their books around.

In response to a later question all female respondents recalled the machines that were shown, but only two of them were able to recall the specific machines. Three of the respondents mentioned that these shots showed that each one was doing his own work. One of the women recalled shots of a woman putting her child to sleep hungry, and a woman distributing "roti" amongst 7 children, and a girl being sold by force. When asked whether the film was trying to say anything through these shots, four of the women merely said that the film wanted the people in the village to follow what was shown in the film. One woman said that the pictures meant that there was so much unhappiness and poverty in the world, and in times of poverty people also sell their own children. She said that the film also meant to show how people worked on machines and how they cultivated land.

All the women remembered the boy and the girl by the seashore and while three of them said that they were writing something, two women said that they were holding hands and expressing love. While four of them said specifically that after that the two were married, and three of the respondents mentioned that the couple exchanged rings, one respondent only said that there was a wedding. All the five women recalled the Nikah and the Hindu wedding. The calendar was remembered by

all the five women, and while two of them remembered the leaves being torn none of them knew why it was shown or what it meant.

Only one of the respondents recalled the two reddened hands, but did not know why these were shown. Two women were unable to recall a change in the film after this, while two respondents said that there was a change, but they could not say of what kind or why. One mentioned that a man was digging some very hard ground and another said that in places people were shown dying, at others children being born, and a lot of hands covering wires; two women said that they could only recall that the film rapidly comes to an end, and could not recall the change at all.

All the women remembered the later shots of the village where dry land was being dug and two of them also mentioned a number of starving people - none of them said what this signified, though one respondent did say that it must have meant something, since money is not spent on meaningless films.

Again though they all remembered a number of hands that were shown in the end and the words रुकिये, they were unable to comprehend clearly the meaning. One of the women said that the hands belonged to various people who were hungry and thirsty, and who were liable to start fighting any moment and the words " रुकिये " were said to stop them from doing so. One woman said that there were a lot of hands on wires, and the noise in the background indicated that they may have been fighting and the word " रुकिये " was to stop them fighting and that they should all work together. One said that " रुकिये " was said to tell people to stop having more children, as there was peace in having less children. One woman said that it was to stop inflation and one did not know why the words were spoken.

It would seem therefore that the overall recall of the women was coherent, in fact at times more so than that of the male respondents. But though they were able to recall the shots, at times on their own and at times aided by the interviewer, their comprehension of what these shots actually meant and their involvement with the film as such was casual, and lesser than was the case with the male respondents. Though they all said that they liked the film and that it was simple, four of them neither knew what the film was about nor the message it was supposed to convey and their response that they

liked the film and it was simple cannot be trusted.

Like the men, the women also uniformly remembered the shots of a man ploughing and a cow being milked, as also the opening shot of the child and its hands and the books; and unlike the men where only two of them remembered the boy and the girl at the seashore, all the female respondents remembered them and four of them said that they were married later.

When asked whether the film had any effect on them, two male respondents said that they were affected by the film. One respondent who had earlier identified the film as being about family planning said that he realised that a small family is a happy family. One man who had earlier said that the film was about skill of the hands, said that everything in the film was good, and that from the film, he learnt that one should do something creative with one's hands. Another respondent who had also identified the film as being about family planning said that "there was some effect," but could not be specific as to what effect the film really had on him. Another man said that film could have an effect only if the film gave some sort of guidance, but being farmers, they had nothing more to learn from this film. This particular respondent had earlier identified the film as being about various occupations, and hence the response that the film was not relevant for farmers. However, he did say that certain scenes like the child crying, the cow not giving milk, the dry earth and people begging and the girl being forcibly sold, saddened him, and he felt that people should not do anything evil and that there should be no famine. One of the men whose recall was low and who did not know what the film was about said that the film had no effect on him but added that one should fear god's wrath.

All the female respondents said that the film had no effect on them though they all felt sad when they saw a man dying and felt sympathy towards his family. One woman was also touched by the scene of a woman distributing "roti" amongst her children and said that there were people who could not even feed their children. Two women said that they found watching the films entertaining.

Though the different machines were remembered by the respondents, their attitude towards them was non serious, and they did not relate to them. They felt involved with

other scenes like a man ploughing or milking a cow or the child that was shown in the beginning, perhaps because they could relate to these things even without being told anything about them because of the similarity to their own way of life. The later scenes of poverty and starvation provoked some response from 4 of the respondents, while the others did not mention these scenes with any particular feeling or sense of involvement.

When asked about the hands shown in the film, all the men knew that only hands were shown, but while three of them did not know what these hands signified, one said that they were shown because man is solely dependent on his hands for everything - his livelihood, his food and his income. One respondent said that hands were shown so that people may stop evil because hands mean strength and self reliance and should be used for good things only. It is only with hands that so many of life's important functions like marriage, birth and death are performed. He seemed to have found the hands switching off the lamp particularly touching. Though all female respondents also recalled that only hands had been shown in the film, they only said they had been shown because hands are used to do all kinds of work.

But none of the respondents perceived the producer's argument, that was presented in the film, of unemployment and population explosion and family planning as a solution to them.

All respondents, male and female, distinguished between the scenes of the village and the city and three men viewed the problem of homophile critically. One man argued that the problems of people living in the cities and in the villages could not be similar, because he said that the village scenes depicted poor people. Even the big farmers were pulling along somehow, whereas city people lived differently. They had their own factories and each one was doing something. One respondent found these shots unfamiliar and said about them that they were neither of the village nor of the city. One said that though the film showed present day problems he found some of the things unfamiliar, saying that in the village they neither used machines, nor did girls type. He was however able to identify certain other scenes like people begging which he said also happened in the village. Though there were no pickpockets in the villages, there were other kinds of crime, like thefts, and problems existed everywhere.

All the female respondents perceived that there were difficulties in both towns and villages, but pointed out that problems were greater in the villages particularly for the landless who found it difficult to make both ends meet, and one of them said that this was the reason why several people migrated to the cities where there were plenty of factories; but then again the townspeople had to buy everything. Therefore though they perceived that problems existed everywhere, they found their problems different.

#### INTERPRETATION

Recall was fragmented. Among the women, though the number of shots or sequences they recalled was greater than the men, there was no linkage in the recall between shot and shot or sequence and sequence. The impression of the film was also fragmented. A man dying, many hands, a boy and girl expressing love, sympathy for a child crying or hungry, evoked some emotions but these were not connected to each other; the totality of the film did not leave an impression, only a few shots isolated from each other. Comprehension for most women was generally nil, or also fragmented, their reaction being that the film must have some meaning. Only one woman linked any shots in her interpretation and this also was not a whole interpretation but of segments. The first section with the various working scenes meant that people must work quickly like the machines did; the second and third sections of the black and white shots and the montage meant hunger and poverty and people should stop having so many children. What precisely in the film gave her this impression, she was unable to say, and the interpretation of these segments were not linked to form an understanding of the whole film.

Among the men also, recall was fragmented, and impressions were fragmented, but perhaps less so than the women, though the quantity of recall was less than the women. Two of the men recalled very little. Out of the other three, they at least recalled portions of the film as sets of shots, not individual ones. Three men recalled people working, one recalled children studying, another recalled different kinds of work, another recalled hunger and famine, and "evil". But they could not make sense of the scenes of crime, or slums, or illness that were shown, only the impression of poverty and hunger remained. The impression of these three men was

again restricted to sequences. Only three men ventured to give any meaning to the film at all. But their comprehension was fragmented and only one of them linked portions of the film, saying that there was famine, hunger and evil, and better work skills should be adopted to remove it.

This kind of recall and comprehension reflects on the structure of the film itself. Without the help of a dialogue or commentary, the looseness of the structure becomes all the more obvious and its weakness to communicate gets emphasised. In some cases, the shots themselves are not linked to each other and in others, the sequences - basically no more than a set of similar shots, - are not linked to each other. Also perhaps, an apparently non narrative structure, especially without commentary, is not a comprehensible idiom for such an audience.

The intention of showing this film without the last shots of the family planning symbol was (i) to see whether the argument presented in the film was perceived as intended by its producer, or in any other way such that family planning as a solution would naturally link with it; (ii) so as to arrive at this without the audience pre-empting its own responses, being led on by an obvious symbol, especially since this film was the last of a series of seven films on family planning shown to this audience.

Looking at the responses from this point of view, nobody perceived the intended statement of the film linking overpopulation to unemployment. Only one respondent said the film was about family planning because it showed starving children and a large number of hands with a roti being passed from hand to hand, and children being born every 15 seconds, and the shot of children with books which meant that a smaller number of children could be better educated. He did not perceive anything else, saying that the film "advised one to do one's work well and to have fewer children". So this respondent came close to comprehending the film, though he said it had no effect on him, and then contradicted himself by saying that he liked the film for its message. Probably, his comprehension was aided by the fact that our interviewing was always on family planning films and his contradiction in opinion was because he was unclear but eager to please.

One respondent said that there is poverty and hunger and

there should be less children and we must work well like the machines. She did not make any causal connection between these statements. Therefore she did not perceive the intended argument of the film, but nevertheless, what was perceived had some relationship to a population problem.

Another respondent talked vaguely of evil and hunger and famine and how it should be stopped, and also talked of "how we should have agricultural skills to improve this condition." This had no relationship at all to the film's intention.

One man said that the film was about family planning. He also said how he discovered this. He mentioned that there was a shot of a roti being divided to many outstretched hands. But this seemed merely an identification of a stereotype from earlier associations and indicated his sharpness in perceiving the purpose of the film show rather than anything of the film content, for on further questioning, he could not find any meaning in any of the shots or sequences; instead he said "it can be understood by those who are capable of understanding", also that the other shots taught agricultural methods. So his response seems to have been dictated by a clever assimilation of what propaganda films' intention could be, as there is nothing in his entire interview to support that he perceived any argument in the film. None of the other respondents comprehended anything or had any impression of the film.

On the whole, it can be said that comprehension, perception, or even impression was very low and therefore the question of credibility, effect and agreement does not arise.

The fragmented nature of the film and the confused impression it left also seemed responsible for the lack of involvement which was apparent through all the interviews.

On the other hand, the problem of homophily seems to have asserted itself here, and all the respondents noticed and remarked on the difference between rural and urban scenes and the strangeness of urban events, like the girls typing, to their environment. They also went on to say that the problems were different in the towns and villages.

In the form and structure of the film, are missing elements

that could have related to this audience. The male respondents have themselves expressed their felt lack of any kind of guiding or explanatory words in the film, from which they could have taken even a clue to understand. On the other hand, women, are prone to ignore disembodied words, and pay attention to pictures, and rely on a sequential, well structured visual narrative or juxtaposition of shots even when there are words on the soundtrack. This self-explanatory visual structure was also missing. So neither form nor content was intelligible to the audience nor was there any cohesive emotional impact of this film.

Mr. Chandra	Director	Tejas Dalal
Dr. Aggarwal	Producer	Tejas Dalal
Dr. Arora	Director	Tejas Dalal
Dr. Singh	Producer	Chandana Palani
Dr. Verma	Producer/Director	Tejas

Also, Mrs. Aggarwal, producer and director of the film 'Voice of Protest', the director of Chandana Palani were not available, the director of 'Chor Chor' was actually responsible for the production and therefore the producer mentioned in the credits was not interviewed.

Interviews were conducted with the producers and directors of the films to find out their background and their intention in making their respective films, how they hoped to achieve that through content and techniques, what acquaintance they had with their subject and audience, and finally what feedback and modifications to the film took place, if any. We also wished to find out their motivation for making their films and trace the process of information with other members of the team during the film's inception and completion. We had hoped for a substantial and detailed response to our questions. Unfortunately this was not what we got from most of the filmmakers. Part of the reason was the interlocking conditions. Availability of the interviewees was such that very few interviews could not be conducted with all of them part of the reason was that most of the producers, especially the one government one, did not seem mentally geared to talking about the issues that our interview raised and were unable to be very responsive.

There emerged a fairly clear distinction between the government

## II INTENT OF THE FILMAKER.

The following filmmakers were interviewed:

Suresh Nigam	Director	Chor Chor
Pramod Pati	Producer	Actual Experience
OP Arora	Director	Actual Experience
GP Asthana	Producer	Teen Saal Baad
VB Chandra	Director	Teen Saal Baad
GD Aggarwal	Producer	Teen Gharaney
KA Abbas	Director	Teen Gharaney
BP Joshi	Producer	Chautha Palna
Vinla	Producer/Director	Hands

Atma Ram, producer and director of the film Years of Promise, the director of Chautha Palna were not available, the director of Chor Chor was actually responsible for the production and therefore the producer mentioned in the credits was not interviewed.

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There emerged a fairly clear difference between the government

made films -- Chor Chor, Actual Experience and Teen Saal Baad, and the privately made films, with only Teen Gharaney among the latter showing a clearer picture.

There was no specific brief or even a specific campaign theme that the privately produced films were related to. We do not have information on Years of Promise, but Chautha Palna and Hands were related generally to family planning with no specific theme. The risk was greater as the films were not commissioned and the effort was to sell the maximum possible number of copies. There was no deep social commitment or professional interest. The audience and the subject were not areas of involvement for the producers nor did they evoke much thought. KA Abbas, directing Teen Gharaney, was an exception to this, as his ideas had clarity and consistency. Vinla's ideas were not so cursory about Hands as Joshi's on Chautha Palna. The procedure was to evolve an idea, make a film, then show it to a purchasing authority and once the films and their prints were bought, there the process ended.

On the other hand, a fairly clear brief had been received for the two films Teen Saal Baad and Actual Experience made by Films Division. The brief concerned both content and purpose and defined the intended audience. A fair amount of study of case histories and dialogue with family planning workers preceded the making of the films and strategies of presentation were also worked out in relationship to whatever idea the filmmaker had of his audience. This was gained more by personal experience and general knowledge than anything else, but there was a clarity and definition of thought in these matters.

The director of Chor Chor, though he did not receive a specific brief from the Uttar Pradesh Government for whom he works, was given the freedom to choose a theme and argument to convince his audience of the necessity for a small family. Though he did not study the audience or the subject, he involved himself at another level, drawing on his personal experience, childhood environment and a reliance on his intuitive feel for audience and film which were quite well defined and strong. He also gave prolonged thought to evolving the strategy of presentation for his film.

However, what was common to all the films was an absence of

audience feedback and any subsequent modification. The exception was Actual Experience which was subjected to a study with a small urban sample base and a few modifications were carried out in its dialogue.

A brief study of the individual cases related to the respective film's performance in our spectator response study will clarify the above pattern.

Mr Joshi, the producer of Chautha Palna, mainly makes feature films and is an independent producer. He said his primary objective in making Chautha Palna was financial. He was unclear about his previous filmmaking experience saying he was a film journalist and he had worked with other film producers in undefined capacities. He was of course also interested in the cause, he said. He intended this film for a rural audience in North India and wanted to convey the message of limiting the family to two children. Very little of this got across to our audience. He chose the song and dance as he felt this style was most effective. But the field observations indicate otherwise. He had no brief, no consultations with anyone. His knowledge of his audience was 'general', so was his acquaintance with his subject. His feedback consisted of watching his film in a theatre and he felt the audience imitated characters in the film after they saw it. He concluded that they liked the film. He would not care to modify the film in any way, nor did he modify it in the process from conception to completion. He seemed quite uninterested in the film, and complained that he would not undertake any more such films as he found the film purchasing agencies in the government too corrupt to deal with. His film was shot in the studio, as it was convenient. Chautha Palna is shown quite frequently in the rural areas compared to the total number of rural film shows.

Vinla is a dancer by training, has made two previous films for State Governments, and is an independent producer. She intended her film, Hands for an urban audience, "but also a rural audience," and for an all India release. She also had no brief, or specific campaign theme. The film was made, and then sold to the various purchasing agencies, mainly the government field publicity and family planning departments. She had been working in slum areas in Bombay with a Family Planning Unit and her knowledge of her audience and of the subject came from this work and the pamphlets and literature

available with the unit, which she came across in the course of her work. She chose her theme as unemployment and population explosion, watching the idle hands in the slums where she worked. She did not use commentary or dialogue in this film as she felt the pictures told their own story better. Vinla felt that though she wanted to carry out some modifications in the film during production, the music track had already been too tightly laid to permit any change without incurring a lot of expenditure. Her feedback consisted of watching the film with some people in a village near Bombay and she found that they liked the film. Hands is recommended for showing to rural audiences, especially by the Department of Field Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Hands conveyed almost nothing to our audience, and was the least comprehensible of the seven films shown in our spectator response study.

Teen Gharaney was produced by Goverdhandas Aggarwal, whose company, National Education and Information Films, has been in (some) production and (more of) distribution, of educational films for several years. The film's director, KA Abbas, as well Mr Aggarwal, seemed quite clear about the intention behind the film. Though they had no brief and according to Mr Aggarwal, the family planning programme was too early in its development and had not evolved any particular campaign theme, the thinking behind the film was quite clear and consistent. It was meant for an urban middle class audience, was shot in a studio, and the narrative format with dialogue was used as they felt the audience was more receptive to such a format. The choice of humour was also dictated by the feeling that 'some things get across in humour when they do not otherwise'. The director also said that the idea of the film was to get rid of the notion that 'a large family was divinely blessed'. Many of these elements did get across even to our rural audience, though the film was intended for an urban audience. Both the director and producer said they would not like to change anything in the film. The director had no feedback, saying the producer must have got some from the purchasing agencies. The producer merely said, "we were told the film was good".

Actual Experience was made by the Films Division of the Government of India. It had a clear brief from the Department of Family Planning, with the objective of dispelling fears about the loop as a contraceptive device, countering rumours, and creating credibility by filming interviews of actual

users of the loop. The director, OP Arora, the producer, Pramod Pati and the family planning officials worked closely together on the film, and the filmmakers studied their subject with the help of case studies, field workers and publications of the Department of Family Planning. The intended audience, the producer said, was urban and rural while the director emphasised the urban. Mr Pati also went on to say that he desired that stylistically the film should be unsophisticated, so that a rural audience may understand it. The director felt that a wide representation of regions was achieved by using a number of languages and people of different regions, and he was quite satisfied with his mixed use of synchronous sound and voice-over. These elements of presentation were precisely what confused our audience and the number of different people filmed decreased identification and credibility. Nor did the film manage to counter rumours or dispel fears. Mr Pati told our interviewer that since making the film, his opinion about its suitability for a rural audience had changed and he felt it would have been ideal if there could have been separate films for separate audiences of differing natures and language groups. But there were practical constraints within which the Films Division worked which could not make this possible. The film was studied in Bombay and Delhi, but using a small urban sample, and minor modifications in dialogue were carried out. The film was shot on location.

Teen Saal Baad also received a brief, but whereas the producer, Mr Asthana, told us it was to advocate family planning to a Muslim audience, the director, Chandra, was more specific and said that the purpose of the film was to communicate the idea of spacing between children, especially to a Muslim audience, but generally to a North Indian rural audience, giving the mother's health and general family welfare as the reason to do so. The producer was acquainted with his subject as he had been coordinating family planning publicity in Films Division and said he had an idea of his audience through his Muslim friends. The director acquainted himself through case studies; both the director and the producer had worked for a long time in Uttar Pradesh and belong there. The director also chose a narrative/dialogue format, followed a slow pace in the film and used characters from a village near Bombay to play his roles. The main characters in the film are a young Muslim Couple. All these elements were chosen to relate better to the film's intended audience and

our spectator response study showed that a fair amount was achieved in terms of their relating to this film. Though the film was shot on location in a village near Bombay the male spectators in our study remarked on the strangeness of the nuclear family structure shown in the film and many of the respondents said the characters seemed a little urbanised. The feedback the filmmakers had was through the press and through observation while sitting with an audience in an urban theatre. The director felt that though he did not feel any modifications were necessary in the film, he was however open to the idea that changes might improve it.

Chor Chor was produced by Uttar Pradesh State Government. The director, Suresh Migam had only a general brief, but drew on his family and personal experience and selected the theme of land division with which he was able to identify due to his own childhood experiences. He based his film on a short story by Shankar Prasad Singh, which was considerably modified for the film. He did not wish to employ humour, as the subject was a serious one, and wished rather to stir social consciousness. Since the subject was general no study of it was necessary. His attitude was to present a problem, and let the audience come to their own conclusions, for as long as he could make them think, his purpose was achieved. That is one reason why he avoided mentioning specific methods and adopting a "hard sell" approach. He used a first person narration as that was an objective view of the events of the story given by a character not directly participating in the story of the film. And this distance would be effective in its emotional impact.

Regarding the audience, he said that unfortunately he had to compromise as the film had to be made for both urban and rural audiences. But he went on to say that it did not matter what the audience was, if the film was good and the filmmaker honest. His emphasis was on the quality of the film itself and the conviction of the filmmaker and his involvement with the subject. He said that though he tried reading audience reports, he was disappointed as they did not give much insight into the reactions of the audiences.

He intended the film for both the landed and the landless people though the story of the film was about the landed class. He felt this should make no difference. Though working intuitively, the response in our spectator response study

indicates that the filmmaker seems to have been able to achieve many of his objectives, even though only sectionally, - the male section of our spectators were affected by this film. However, Nigan says that if he were to remake this film, he would retain the content but improve technical shortcomings of which there were many. The spectator response reflects their sensitivity to this factor as well as the characters in the film being better off than themselves. They reacted adversely to these elements, the compromise in the intended mixed audience perhaps being responsible for the choice of characters in the film.

Looking across these descriptions of the filmmakers' making of their films, a few points stand out. A specific brief, a well defined message and intended audience help to make the film more communicative. Whether this is evolved by the filmmaker or the sponsor, or in unison, the effect is equal. Either deep involvement in or study of the subject clarifies one's approach and is reflected in the quality of the film. This is well supported by careful consideration of the film literacy of the intended audience in shaping format and style of the film.

The motivation of the filmmaker, his conviction, his professional interest and his reason for making a particular film or films of this nature, is also important. Perhaps here, apart from the intention and experience of the filmmaker, his financial constraints also influence his capabilities and his motivation. They also influence the time, thought and care he gives to his film.

There seems to be a singular lack of interest in the audience, no mechanism for feedback; and no prolonged familiarity of the filmmaker with the intended audience of the film, especially when it is rural.

(2) *Participation of reality:* The film image gives an impression of reality. This impression of reality comes from within us, from the projections and identifications that are mixed with our response to the film. By isolating fiction from reality this makes it easier for the spectator to participate in the fictional reality on the screen.

Participation, however, must be engendered. It is not enough to be 'disconnected' from the real world, the spectator has to accomplish a transference of reality, involving a whole, affective...

### III. A SEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF TWO FAMILY PLANNING FILMS

In our analysis of spectator response patterns to films as compared to the filmmaker's intent we find that the images evoke responses that were unintended, comprehension and credibility fluctuates and messages often do not register on the spectator. Of course this varies between different cultural groups with varying levels of film literacy. In our study of the communication process we felt that an important contribution would be to make an analysis of some of the films that we were examining for spectator response.

Our objective was to arrive at a methodology for analysing the film expression - the use of language, the consistency of theme, message and narrativity. In this context, we found the method of film semiotics developed by Christian Metz very meaningful. The second objective of this study was to apply this method to motivational films while normally this method has been restricted to the study of the feature film. We further felt that this analysis will help in the developing of better research tools to understand the spectator's perception patterns of film. Finally we also wanted to found some basis for the spectator response patterns in terms of the inherent structure of the films.

We selected two films (Teen Saal Baad and Hands) out of the lot of seven for this analysis. These two films represented two extremes in film presentation methods, one using sequential narrative, with characters and dialogues and Hands being structured like a visual essay with only music on the soundtrack. We first examine the nature of film-cinematographic narrative, film language and relation between film and linguistics. Then we outline a methodology of film semiotics in terms of large syntagmatic units as developed by Metz. Thirdly, we classify and analyse the two films Teen Saal Baad and Hands in terms of its syntagmatic units. Finally we attempt to draw some conclusions which we relate to the spectator response pattern.

#### 1. NATURE OF FILM

(i) Impression of reality: The film image gives an impression of reality. This impression of reality comes from within us, from the projections and identifications that are mixed with our perception of the film. By isolating fiction from reality film makes it easier for the spectator to participate in the fictional reality on the screen.

Participation, however, must be engendered. It is not enough to be 'disconnected' from the real world, the spectator has to accomplish a transference of reality, involving a whole, affective,

perceptual and intellectual activity, which can be sparked only by a spectacle resembling at least slightly the spectacle of reality. In the case of film the principal positive factor causing this impression of reality is the reality of motion. "To inject the reality of motion into the unreality of the image and thus to render the world of the imagination more real than it had ever been - this is only part of the secret of motion pictures."

(ii) Cinematographic narrative:- A narrative has a beginning and an ending - that is to say, the narrative is a temporal sequence. One of the functions of the narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme - and this is what distinguishes narrative from simple description (which creates one space in time) and from the image (which creates one space in another space). This example of the cinematographic narrative easily illustrates the point: A motionless and isolated shot of a stretch of desert is an image; several partial and successive shots of this desert waste make up a description; several successive shots of a caravan moving across the desert constitute a narrative.

Every narrative is therefore a statement (discourse) or a sequence of statements. In this sense it must refer necessarily to a subject of the statement. On the whole the presence of a narrator is always felt in the cinema. In the case of film narrative the spectator perceives images, which have obviously been selected and arranged by the filmmaker ('grand imagier') and it is he who is the 'potential linguistic focus' situated somewhere behind the film, and representing the basis that makes the film possible. A narrative is also a sum of events that have been ordered in a particular sequence.

Another particular aspect of the narrative is that the rendered object is unreal. By its very existence, the narrative film suppresses the here and now, even in live news coverage on television, which is real but occurs elsewhere and on the screen, is unreal.

In film narrative the image is the vehicle of articulated language and like the sentence (which corresponds to a statement) of the human language, a shot is the basic properly narrative unit and it has the following characteristics:

(a) Film images are like statements and unlike words, infinite in number;

- (b) They are in principle the invention of the filmmaker (speaker);
- (c) They yield to the receiver a quantity of indefinite information;
- (d) They are actualized units;
- (e) Since they are indefinite in number, only to a small degree do they assume their meanings in paradigmatic opposition to the other images that could have appeared at the same point along the filmic chain.

(iii) Film as language:- In the early years of the cinema and especially during the period when montage and the efficacy of it were being discovered by filmmakers like Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov, a veritable galaxy of film theoreticians evolved around the concept of montage. It became wrongly asserted that montage was in reality the sum of filmic creation. The isolated shot was only raw material to be manipulated and pieced together through montage. Descriptive realism or shooting a scene continuously was totally unacceptable. It had to be fragmented, isolated and then reassembled to convey its meaning. In other words, montage became a mechanical means by which film fragments could be put together by the filmmaker. In this context, Roberto Rossellini in an interview to Cahiers du Cinema many years later said, "Things are. Why manipulate them?"

On the other hand it was natural that film was thought to be a 'language system' rather than a language. Film required some organisation and necessitated cutting and montage. It was believed that a film was understood only on the basis of the viewer's understanding of the system of the cinema. The inherent intelligibility of a dissolve or double exposure cannot clarify the plot of a film unless the spectator has already been exposed to films where double exposure or dissolve was used intelligently. Yet, the narrative force of a plot can lead us to understand the double exposure or the dissolve, if not in the first film we see them, at least by the third or fourth.

With the writings of Andre Bazin and the appearance of Cahiers du Cinema group a questioning of the manipulative nature of montage started. The argument was that if film was a language then it should speak and not artificially by arranging images according to some prescribed system whose necessity was no longer evident! Continuity shooting, depth of field and the sequence shot found

expression in the films of young directors of the French 'nouvelle vague'. Alexandre Astruc, a filmmaker himself, coined the phrase 'camera stylo'. The camera pen should write what it is made to write; and the writer should be free to use it any way he wants.

(iv) Film and Linguistics:- If film was not a language system could the study of film have a linguistic dimension? De Saussure who made the study of human languages the subject of linguistics also laid the foundations of a much broader science, semiotics (semiology) of which linguistics was only a part. Semiotics would include nonverbal systems (highway code, cartographic convention), transversal systems (folktales, myths) and also systems that bridge the verbal and nonverbal. Oddly enough, though linguistics was to be a part of semiotics, it developed faster and the study of human language has given linguistics a rigor which is useful, in the study of film semiotics.

In cinema a cinematographic language (the specific levels of codification that are constituted by the signifying organizations proper to all films) has no second articulation. The signifier (the image) and the significate (what it represents) is the same. There is no distance between 'content' and 'expression'. In film, cinematographic language constitutes only one of many signifying levels. Some other signifying organisations would include the perceptual, intellectual, iconological, ideological and other elements that affect the understanding of a whole film. Cinematographic language as a concept is a methodological abstraction because it is never present alone in films and is always present in combination with various other systems of signification - cultural, social, stylistic, perceptual.

In cinema the image corresponds to one or more sentences (in the linguistics sense) and the sequence is a complex segment of a discourse. The shot, a sentence, is the smallest unit. And even when the shot is like a word (a close up of a revolver) it is still like a word sentence (here is a revolver!) The image is therefore always speech and never a unit of language like the word. De Saussure had observed that syntax is only an aspect of the syntagmatic. The shot is the smallest unit of the filmic chain; the sequence is a great syntagmatic whole.

Film, like verbal language can be used merely as a vehicle, without any artistic intention, with designation (denotation) governing alone. In any work of art the world that is represented (denoted) never constitutes the major part of what the author has to say. Its function is only to introduce the expressed world: the

artists' style, the relationship of themes and values - in short, the connotative universe. In cinema on the other hand aesthetic expressiveness is grafted onto natural expressiveness. It is easy to create an effect when one has available the natural expression of things, of beings, of the world! There is expression when a 'meaning' which is somehow immanent to a thing, is directly released from it, and merges with its very form. In the semiological sense meaning is naturally derived from the signifier as a whole, without resorting to a code. In cinema it is the art of homogeneous connotation (expressive connotation added to expressive denotation). The truth of this is therefore that there can be no totally aesthetic use of cinema ('pure' cinema) because even the most connotative image cannot avoid being also a photographic representation. Similarly there is no totally 'utilitarian' cinema because the most denotative images cannot avoid some connotation. The most literal educational documentary cannot prevent itself from framing its images and organizing their sequence with at least something like an artistic concern. To speak the language of film is to invent it. Unlike the spoken sentence a film does not automatically entail a direct answer from an interlocutor. present, an immediate reply in the same language; and in this sense film is expression rather than signification. Hence the need to study the larger signifying units in the cinema.

So far there have been four ways of approaching cinema. The first two belong to the common viewer. Films must be seen; they must be seen in their historic context. The third approach would be the theoretician's approach: filmmakers, critics who are within the cinematographic universe expounding the various theories of cinema (Eisenstein, Bazin). Fourthly, there is the approach of people from the outside. Filmology or the study of filmic fact as studied by psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, aestheticians.

Metz suggests a semiological approach which is very close to both filmology and the theory of cinema. The approach would be derived as much from the writings of the great theoreticians as from the studies of filmology. The methods of linguistics applied to cinema might achieve, at least on the level of large signifying units, a study of the mechanisms by which human significations are transmitted in human society.

## 2. METHODOLOGY FOR FILM SEMIOTICS

The first problem that arises in this context is the question of narrativity and cinema. Are we to study only the feature films (narrative films) or, include short films, documentaries,

technological, pedagogical and advertising films? The historical and social fact is that cinema has evolved to be primarily a machine for telling stories. It is not only the social superiority of the narrative film but also that nonnarrative films differ from the feature films with respect to their social purpose and by their content much more than their 'language process'. The basic features of the semiotics of the cinema - montage, camera movements, scale of shots, relationship between image and speech, sequences - are on the whole same in the small and big films. Another important fact is that historically cinema emerged from a mere 'means of reproduction' to a vehicle of telling stories through specific signifying procedures. Many optical effects and 'punctuations' were developed in the search process of the artist to articulate the narrative discourse.

In the study of cinematographic language we could either examine it as a semiotics of denotation or as a semiotics of connotation. In the latter case it would be close to cinema as an 'art' but this study would be like the study of literary art. The properly aesthetic orderings and constraints - versification, composition, framing, camera movement, light effects - serve as the connoted instance, superimposed over the denoted meaning. In cinema the significate of all connotation would be the cinematographic (literary) style, genre (the epic, the western), symbol (philosophical, ideological) or its poetic atmosphere; and its signifier would be the whole denotated semiological material. In American gangster movies, where, for example, the slick pavement of the waterfront distills an impression of anxiety and hardness (significate of connotation); the scene represented (dimly lit, deserted wharves, with stacks of overhead cranes, the significate of denotation) and the technique of the shooting, which is dependent on the effects of lighting in order to produce a certain picture of the docks (signifier of denotation) converge to form the signifier of the connotation. In other words, the significate of connotation can establish itself only when the corresponding signifier brings into play both the signifier and significate of denotation.

On the other hand, the concept of diegesis is as important for the film semiologist as the idea of art. That is to say, the film's represented instance: the narration itself and also the fictional space and time dimensions implied in and by the narrative, and consequently the characters, the landscapes, the events, and other narrative elements, insofar as they are considered in their denoted aspect. These are central questions to the semiotics

of the cinema. In film, unlike still photography from which it is derived, the denotation is not a visual transfer (photochemical reproduction) which is not codified and has no inherent organisation. In the cinema, a whole semiotics of denotation is possible and necessary for a film is composed of many photographs which give us only partial views of the diegetic referent. For example, a 'house' would be a shot of a staircase, a close-up of a window, brief establishing shot of a window etcetera. Thus a kind of filmic articulation appears. It is the denotation itself that is being constructed, organised and codified. Lacking absolute laws, filmic intelligibility depends on a certain number of dominant habits. A film put together haphazardly would not be understood.

As discussed earlier the smallest unit in the filmic chain, the shot, is more akin to a statement (free combination or a speech arrangement). The image is always assertive - that is to say by changing any of the elements (camera angle, lighting etcetera) a different statement would be obtained and therefore the syntagmatic category will be dominant rather than the paradigmatic category in the semiotics of the cinema. Although each image is a free creation the arrangement of these images into an intelligible sequence - cutting and montage - fit into the constraints of a few large syntagmatic structures. Therefore in our study we shall attempt to study film semiotics in terms of these large syntagmatic categories. Metz distinguishes between eight main types of syntagmatic units in film language.

(i) AUTONOMOUS SHOTS where a single shot constitutes a primary subdivision of the film. The famous sequence shot of modern cinema where an entire scene is treated in a single shot. Some shots can be autonomous also because of their status as syntagmatic interpolations. These can again be further subdivided into four types of inserts: the nondiegetic insert (image having a comparative function showing an object which is external to the action of the film); the subjective insert (image conveying not the present but an absent moment like images of dream, fear, memory etcetera); the displaced diegetic insert (an image that while remaining entirely 'real', is displaced from its normal filmic position. For example, within a sequence of showing the pursuers a single shot of the pursued is inserted) and finally the explanatory insert (the enlarged detail).

(ii) and (iii) Among the syntagmas (autonomous segments composed of several shots) a second criterion makes it possible to separate

nonchronological and chronological syntagmas. In the first, the temporal relationship between the facts presented in the different images is not defined in the film; in the second kind it is. Among the nonchronological syntagma one category is the PARALLEL SYNTAGMA where the montage interweaves two or more alternating motifs but no precise relationship is assigned to them - at least on the level of denotation. For example, images of tranquility alternating with images of disturbance, shots of the city and of the country and so on. This kind of montage has a symbolic value.

A second nonchronological syntagma can be defined as follows: a series of very brief scenes representing occurrences that the film gives as a typical sample of a same order of reality, without in any way locating them in a chronological relation to one another. For example, the first erotic images of Une Femme Marice (Jean Luc Godard 1964) sketch a global picture of modern love through variations and partial representations. This can be termed as a BRACKET SYNTAGMA and frequently a sequence like this is strung together through optical effects (dissolves, pan or wipes) indicating thereby that the sequence should be considered as a whole.

(iv) Among the chronological syntagmas, the temporal relationships between the facts that successive images show us are defined on the level of denotation. In the DESCRIPTIVE SYNTAGMA there is simultaneity in the successive images (a tree, followed by a running stream next to the tree, etcetera).

(v) All other varieties of chronological syntagmas are narrative syntagmas. Within the narrative syntagma there are two divisions: the syntagma may interweave several distinct temporal progressions (ALTERNATE SYNTAGMA) or it may consist of a single succession encompassing all of the images (linear narrative syntagma). The alternate syntagma is quite common and well known as 'parallel montage' or 'synchronism'. For example, shot of the pursuers, followed by a shot of the pursued, and back to a shot of the pursuers. Two or more series of events are presented alternately in such a way that within each series the temporal relationships are consecutive, but that, between the series taken as wholes the temporal relationship is one of simultaneity.

(vi) Within the linear narrative syntagma which is a single succession linking together all the acts seen in the images, a further distinction is possible. Succession may be continuous

(without breaking) or discontinuous (jumps). One should be cautious though not to commit simple camera breaks (cutaway, etcetera). When succession is continuous we have a syntagma that resembles a 'scene' of the theatre or in daily life. The scene reconstructs a unit still experienced as being 'concrete', a place, a moment in time, an action, compact and specific. The signifier is fragmentary in the scene (a number of shots) but the significate is unified and continuous.

(vii) and (viii) As opposed to the scene we have the linear narrative syntagma where the temporal order of the facts presented are discontinuous. These can be termed as sequences proper. Within the sequence proper there are two subdivisions. An ORDINARY SEQUENCE where the temporal discontinuity may be unorganised and scattered and the viewer skips the moments that have, to his mind, no direct bearing on the plot. On the other hand, the discontinuity may be organised and may in fact be the principal structure and intelligibility in the sequence and this could be termed EPISODIC SEQUENCE. The sequence strings together a number of very brief scenes, which are usually separated from each other in a chronological order. In the ordinary sequence each one of the units in the narrative simply presents one of the unskipped moments of the action. In the episodic sequence each image appears distinctly as the symbolic summary of one stage in the fairly long evolution condensed by the total sequence.

In conclusion, before applying this method to the specific films in our context we would like to make a few general observations.

(i) The syntagmatic types in which denotation is not analogous retain a certain amount of naturalness in the relationship of signifier and signified. Thus in the alternate syntagma, denotation is not analogous yet it is seen that the intelligibility of this kind of montage is based on a spontaneous form of interpolation practised by the spectator quite naturally.

(ii) The practice of the cinema, both its creating and its viewing, requires a certain apprenticeship but that is very slight compared to what language demands.

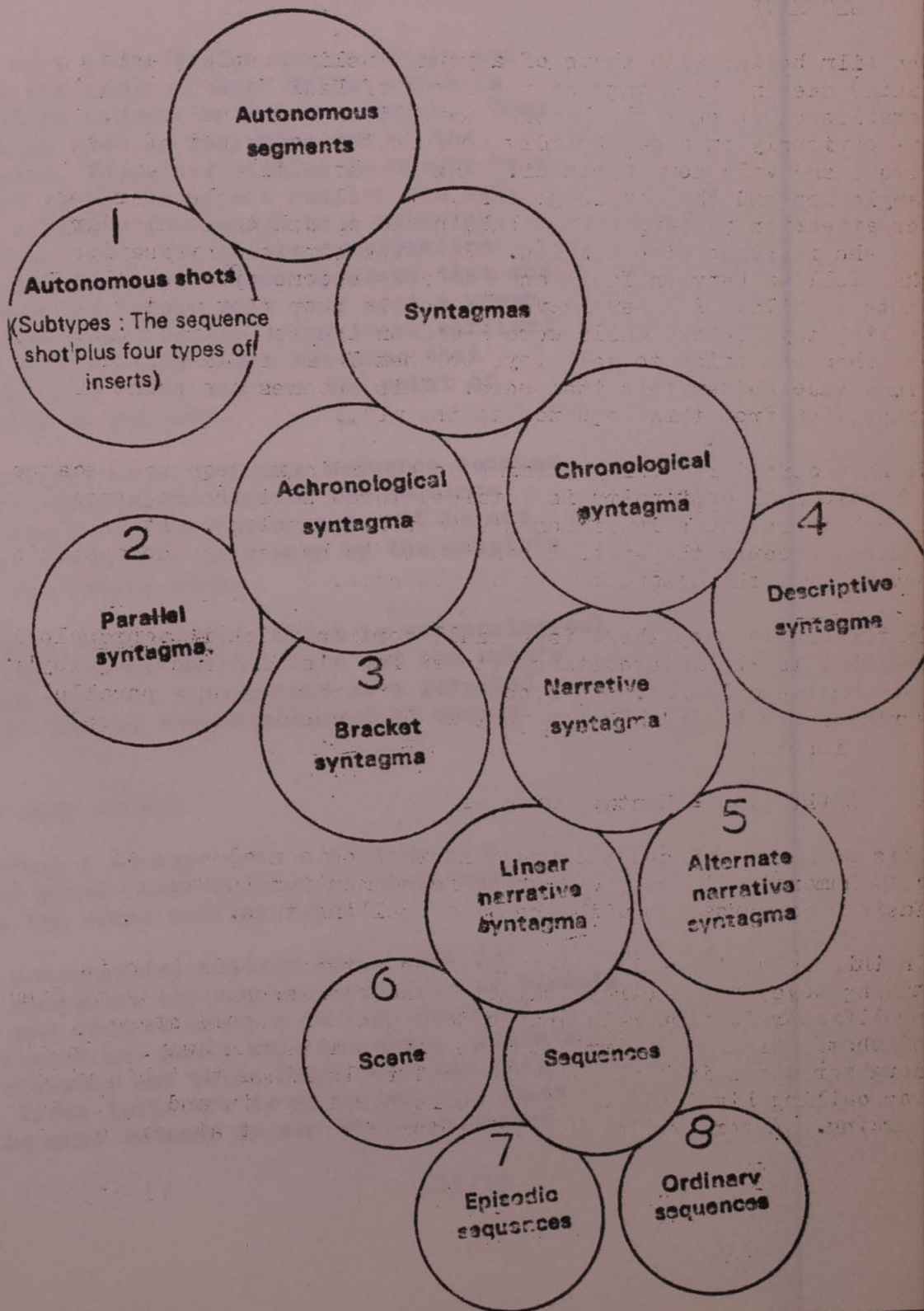
(iii) There are various filmic paradigms which are not being examined here (camera movement, internal structures of a 'shot', dissolves, relationship between sound and light). Only the common characteristics of syntagmatic elements that are already large have been analysed.

(iv) Even though speech is an important element of cinema only the relationships between speech and image, speech and the rest of the sound track have been analysed.

(v) Also at this stage of development of film semiotics it is very difficult to differentiate and demarcate the exact dividing line between 'small' and 'large' units. Thus, as Metz puts it, "when we reach the level of 'small' elements one suddenly finds oneself referred to the myriad winds of culture, the confused murmurings of a thousand other utterances : the symbolism of the human body, the language of objects, the system of colours, the sense of clothing and dress, the eloquence of landscape. In these cases the study of the properly filmic creations of the appropriate significations will provide us with no essential paradigm : for those great creative tropes of meaning and of humanity will remain imbedded in culture."

In this methodology the autonomous segments (units) have been isolated from the film and these units are located in the film and in relation to the plot. The relation between the screen instance (signifier) and the diegetic instance (signified) has to be erected as a methodological principle because only then can identification of the units (autonomous segments) become possible. This is again because of the social fact that cinema has evolved as a story telling device and even in normative films the principles governing them are the same. If the cinema had not evolved as being thoroughly narrative, its grammar would have been different.

### 3 General table of the large syntagmatic category of the image track



4. SYNTAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE TRACK

A. Teen Saal Baad

1. SEQUENCE

The film begins with shots of a young Muslim couple (Yasin and Razia) seeking blessings at the darga of Haji Mallan which is established through the Naatiya Qawwali on the soundtrack. They are obviously in a gay holiday mood as they come out of the mosque and walk down a bazaar. Razia's attention is caught by a bangleshop and the couple go inside to select bangles for her. Her attention is caught by a baby's photograph on a calendar and she responds with a smile. From the little conversation that follows between Yasin and Razia it becomes apparent that she wants a child. As they leave the bangle shop they meet a woman selling toys (whose calls were heard on the sound track earlier) and when she tries to sell toys to them Yasin exclaims that Binda made better toys than hers. This becomes the point of transition from this sequence to the next.

We have considered this syntagma as an ordinary sequence because chronological continuity is retained throughout the sequence though there are skipped moments in the chronology. It is not a scene because the spatial continuity is broken by the couple's moving from the mosque to the bangle shop.

In the bangle shop there is a small portion which is achronological and that is the intercutting between Razia's face and the baby's face on the calendar. This could be interpreted as a parallel syntagma but it is so brief that we have considered it merely as an insert.

2. SCENE 1-2 = Montage with effect

This scene introduced through a montage onto a closeup of a clay humanoid figure (toy) which found mention in Razia and Yasin's conversation with the woman selling toys.

In this scene there is a conversation between Binda (who is making toys) and a stray character who expresses anxiety at Binda's prolific production rate and wonders where he would store all of them. Binda gets irritated and sends this man away. Binda's daughter comes into the workshop and tells Binda that his wife was calling him inside. Binda tells her to go in and continues working. After awhile the girl returns to say that her mother

was crying. Binda quickly gets up to go inside and tells his assistant to pack up and deliver the toys to the shop. The last shot of this scene presumes a few skipped moments as Binda emerges from his house to talk to Razia next door requesting her to look after his wife while he fetched the doctor.

Though there is a brief time lag between Binda's going into the house and his coming out we have treated it as one scene because it is the same continuous action and the last shot is used as a introduction to the next segment.

In this segment also the humanoid clay figure and its foetus like mould can be interpreted as a recurring motif of the baby's face on the calendar in the first sequence. This is important because in this film the filmmaker uses the motif of a child to signify the central message of the film which is one of family planning and the healthy child.

### 3 ALTERNATE SYNTAGMA 2-3 = Ordinary Montage

In this section we have two simultaneous developments alternating with each other as we see Binda hurriedly walking along the village street and close ups of his wife's face in an agonised expression and Razia soothing her. As the pace of the intercutting increases the soundtrack builds up the tempo of the drum beats alternating with the moans and gasps of Binda's wife.

This syntagma is brief and is a typical method applied in cinema to build up dramatic tension in the plot. In this particular case this segment provides a bridge between the earlier segment and the next.

### 4 SEQUENCE 3-4 = Ordinary Montage

This sequence is the most dramatic where we have the heightened agony of Binda's wife as she is in the throes of her labour pains while Razia helplessly watches on. An important detail is the oppressive environment of Binda's household with five impoverished children, crying and fighting with each other. These visual details help to build up the utter helplessness of Razia, especially as one of the children breaks the water pot as Razia is about to take some water for the mother. This build up, though literary, is very effective and the scene ends with the appearance of the doctor and her assistant (professional help), which provides the important transition to the second half of the sequence.

We have chosen to classify this segment as a sequence because though the first part of it is a continuous scene, the second part (after the arrival of the doctor) has a definite break in the temporal continuity as Razia and Binda wait anxiously for the doctor to come out. The doctor comes out and tells Binda that the wife was well but the child was stillborn because the mother was weakened by malnutrition and frequent deliveries.

We also had an indication earlier of the imminent tragedy, when Razia and Binda are waiting for the doctor and Binda treads backwards and stamps and crushes one of the humanoid clay figures (repetitive motif).

The sequence ends with a short scene between the doctor and the stray character (stereotyped) who repeats the fact that he had expressed his concern at Binda's prolific rate of production (an obvious double reference to the toys and the children). Razia and Binda overhear this conversation and exchange a poignant and meaningful glance as they pass each other.

Though this is one segment with a temporal continuity from the initial agony of the wife to the ultimate departure of the doctor, the arrival of the doctor provides a definite dividing line between the agony and helplessness of Razia and the professional resolution to the situation with a message for the future.

5 PARALLEL SYNTAGMA 4-5 = Ordinary Montage

A short segment concentrates on Razia as she returns to her house. The segment can be treated as her vision or nightmare because it is not possible to place it in a spatiotemporal continuity. She comes into the house exhausted after the ordeal. She glances on the clay figure and approaches it, smiling gently. Close up shots of her face and eyes intercut with the toy figure. Then there is a rapid succession of inserts of children's faces and wailing and fighting which are all repeated from the earlier sequence during Razia's encounter with Binda's children. These inserts are brief and very often seem like a flash. Occasionally a shot of Razia's frightened face is inserted as the pace of the montage builds up. At the end of this segment we see Razia lying in the bed completely disoriented with her head at the bottom of the frame.

This segment shows the disturbed state of Razia's mind after she goes through the harrowing experience at Binda's house.

Her earlier joy at anticipating a child as shown in the first segment is negated in this segment and she is left completely disoriented.

6 SCENE 5-6 = Ordinary Montage

This segment begins with Yasin coming home after work. He finds Razia asleep and when he wakes her he notices that she is disturbed. She tries to tell him all that had happened and in one shot it is communicated to him as through the window Yasin and Razia see Binda leave his house with the corpse of the stillborn infant. He comforts her and reassures her. The scene ends on a closeup of Razia's face as on the soundtrack the words of the doctor 'come to me for advice' is repeated. Razia falls asleep.

7 SCENE 6-7 = Wipe

This scene takes place in the family planning clinic where Razia is examined by the doctor and told that she is pregnant. She also tells Razia that there were no problems and that after the first child she should not have another child immediately but should use the IUCD (loop) to space her children. The couple leave the clinic reassured and together in the joy of the expected child.

8 PARALLEL SYNTAGMA 7-8 = Ordinary Montage

The final section of the film has an element of fantasy in it as the music and the optical effects give it a visionary quality. We see Razia and Yasin's faces in closeups intercut with a baby's face and eyes. Then, the two of them are kissing the baby and it brings us to the end of the film as Razia and Yasin walk along laughing and smiling with the family planning clinic in the background.

This sequence is clearly a vision with the intent of reinforcing the family planning message and resolution in terms of a small family and a happy family.

B. HANDS

1 BRACKET SYNTAGMA

This film only uses the image of hands to unfold its narration. It begins with a rapid succession of brief shots in colour of the

hands of an infant clasping a mother's breast as it is being fed, to a child running his finger along the pages of a book, hands engaged in different kinds of work, painting, music, lovers holding hands, hands engaged in marriage ritual, childbirth and finally the mother's and father's hands lifting up a child's hands. At this point the image turns a bright red denoting a dramatic change.

The entire segment which is in colour can be presumed to denote life in its cyclical pattern with birth, growth, education, activity, romance, marriage, childbirth. The images are very commonplace and used more as illustrations rather than as a symbol. Most of the shots have very little motion in them. Each shot is too brief to have any individual signification. In addition, since the hands are not really used as symbols but only as illustrations they do not have any deep signification in the connotative realm either.

2 BRACKET SYNTAGMA 1-2 = Montage with effect

From the shot which turns red we have a visual contrast as the next segment is entirely in black and white. This segment shows images of poverty, unemployment, hunger as hands clasp at a mother's hand distributing food, money changing hands as a girl is being peddled, hands searching for food in a garbage heap, hands digging for water in the parched earth. Though, in this sequence there is a single insert of a chimney in colour we could not attribute any meaning to it except that in the few shots that follow the pace increases and the images are of hands picking pockets, hands behind bars and hands seeking alms. This segment, like the previous one, ends with a shot of outstretched hands seeking alms being masked from above and below as the image freezes to leave this one pair of outstretched hands on the screen. We can only state that this segment where the shots follow one another in quick succession is used to contrast with the earlier segment where life in its many aspects and cyclical pattern was shown. Here the social reality of the Indian context is shown. There are many inconsistencies which arise because the motif of the hands is not used as a symbol but rather as an illustration. Hence, there is no spatiotemporal relationship within the sequence or in relation to each other. The arrangement is whimsical and haphazard.

3 PARALLEL SYNTAGMA 2-3 = Montage with effect

This segment basically consists of a succession of shots from the

colour segment and the black and white segment alternated with each other. Visual contrast between the images of fullness of life and the desolate and depressing poverty emerges as the tonal quality of colour and black and white images alternates. An inconsistency that appears in this section is that images that had not been used earlier are also introduced with no apparent significance. They are casually introduced and removing them from the film would not make any difference. The only new image that had any significance was the image of a clock which is repeated a few times and as the pace of the cutting increases the clock is alternated with a closeup of a baby's face. The obvious implication is that the clock and the baby are somehow related. Presuming that the film has a family planning message we can perhaps suggest that the images connote the population explosion problem (a baby born every nine seconds!)

4 BRACKET SYNTAGMA 3-4 = Montage with effect

The last segment of the film begins with the image of a finger pointing to the audience and the soundtrack echoing the words 'stop it'. This is the first time words are used on the soundtrack which only carried music upto this point. Also 'stop it' are the only words used (repeated in Hindi). From this point the images are those of many hands filling the screen or a man's outstretched hands in a stopping gesture and the shot of two pairs of hands (male and female) entwined in each other coming up from the bottom enclosing the red triangle, a common symbol of family planning. The film ends with a shot of the man's outstretched hands in a stopping gesture in a longshot with the family planning red triangle in a corner.

The film 'Hands' may give the impression of being a nonnarrative film but the linear development of the film clearly indicates its narrativity. The motif of hands is used as an illustration rather than a symbol because it does not emerge with any kind of deep meaning nor does it relate to the message of the film. The random selection of images and the minimal length for which each image is shown signifies just a cursory use of the motif. The only important use has been during each transition between the sections where the image is dramatic to depict (sum up) the sequence that precedes-colour, fullness of life or poverty and unemployment.

## 5 CONCLUSION

If we classify the occurrence of the different syntagmatic types in the two films we obtain the following classification according to the frequency of their occurrence.

- A. TEEN SAAL BAAD: Scene (three), ordinary sequence (two), parallel syntagma (two) and alternate syntagma (one).
- B. HANDS: Bracket syntagma (three), and parallel syntagma (one).

In Teen Saal Baad the scene which is the most useful in terse description of a continuous piece of action dominates as the filmmaker chooses this syntagma in the sections where the thematic content needs precise expression. The scene in Binda's workshop with the stereotype character commenting on the prolific production of toys has a signification in terms of the message of the film. The depiction of Binda as a simple, happy craftsman who makes cheerful little humanoid figures heightens the impact of the later tragedy which again is brought on by this simple person by his ignorance.

The scene between Yasin and Razia where her earlier ordeal in Binda's house gets communicated to Yasin, shows the close relationship between the couple. He understands her fear not only in terms of her experience but also that she does not want to share the same fate as Binda's wife. He reassures her and tells her that he will take her to the doctor. The filmmaker conveys this entire diegesis in a brief segment of continuous action with the emphasis on the visual images.

The scene in the doctor's clinic has meaning in terms of the message of the film. The environment is realistic, the doctor professional and sympathetic and message direct, simple and clear. Here again, the relationship between the couple is emphasised and the fact that Yasin also endorses the doctor's views about spacing really brings them together in the final fantasy.

The two sequences contrast with each other insofar as the introductory sequence establishes the main characters, their religious devotion, their youth, their joys and aspirations and the fact that they are together and happy. The second sequence is dramatic and is the main thrust of the film when the resolution of the subplot (Binda's wife's delivery) is resolved by the professional assistance of the doctor. Because it is a minor plot it resolves in a tragedy which has bearing on Razia

and leads her to take preventive action to avert a similar tragedy.

The use of parallel syntagma which is achronological has bearing on the subject (in this case the main character Razia). As a matter of fact if we include the brief insert in the bangle shop then we see the relationship very clearly. First, we have Razia's vision of a baby (through the baby's face on the calendar) and her anticipated joy which Yasin tries to share but it is still very personal to Razia. The second instance is Razia's nightmare after she goes through the experience in Binda's house. She is afraid, shattered and completely disoriented. The third and final vision is where Razia and Yasin both share the same vision and joys of the expected child.

Though it is not essential to use all the available syntagmatic types a dominant use of scene and sequence shows the filmmakers desire to articulate his narrative in simple straightforward terms. Considering the fact that he probably has large diverse groups of spectators with low levels of film literacy in mind he chose to rely on a simple storytelling format where the message had to be clearly delivered and comprehended. Our spectator response study also confirms that the comprehension of this film was fairly high and it also showed that the parallel syntagmas which are achronological were also understood purely because the force of the narration and the identification of the characters carried it through.

In Hands on the other hand the filmmaker uses the bracket syntagma most often. This syntagma is a subjective achronological unit. Unless clear symbolic interpretations are possible they are difficult to comprehend. The change from colour to black and white is quite obvious in its signification but then the selection of shots are random. The relation between the images of hands engaged in work and other activity during the colour sequence and the impoverished conditions and unemployed hands in the black and white sequence reinforces the tonal contrast. But the diegesis of the theme is not developed and by merely introducing a parallel syntagma (which again is achronological) does not take the theme any more forward than just a contrast between activity - inactivity, fullness-emptiness, joy-sorrow, happiness-grief. The theme of overpopulation which is briefly inserted during the end of the parallel syntagma (intercutting between closeups of a clock and a baby) does not sufficiently establish the theme. From the images that had preceded it does not follow.

The filmmaker probably attempted an impressionistic essay on the theme of overpopulation with a casual imposition of the family planning message (again, only by the symbol of the red triangle). Unfortunately the effectiveness of the narration again depends on the clarity of expression and its inner consistency. In this film there are several inconsistencies which tempt us to believe that the selection of individual shots in each segment was random and had little signification. This in itself is a major limitation to clarity because achronological segments necessarily require a careful arrangement of individual shots. Again the tonal contrast and the stereotype images leave us feeling that the filmmaker's expression is unsubtle and totally fails to have any impact of symbolic signification which a film of this nature could have.

Our spectator response patterns also establishes that comprehension of this film was very low and in some cases totally different interpretations were given to the film. During the film screenings we stopped the film at the end of the third segment in order to see if any member of the spectator group could anticipate the message at the end. Only two could and that too intuitively (recognition of cliché image - woman distributing one roti among five persons). This confirms our assertion that the symbolic dimension of the film and the diegesis remain incomprehensible. Unless clarity of expression is established the final message would only be a superimposition and will have no basis to support it. For a film with a message, this could be a serious limitation.

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