

# NEW METHODS OF CONDUCTING FAMILY LIFE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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The authors explore innovative methods of family life development programmes. They present the social marketing model and its application for raising public awareness about family dynamics. The role that mass media have played in conveying stereotype knowledge and attitudes about family life is critically examined and a constructive use of mass media is suggested for raising public awareness. Finally, the use of group discussions is demonstrated and the technology of education discussed.

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## **Social Marketing**

This section briefly outlines the definition of the term social marketing and the social marketing process, adapted from Kotler and Andreasen (1987). This process has been described with reference to raising public awareness about issues related to the girl child.

### *Definitions*

Social behaviour marketing can best be described as 'the design, implementation and control of programmes designed to ultimately influence individual behaviour in ways that the marketer believes are in the individual's or society's interest' (Kotler and Andreasen, 1987). To achieve this goal the social marketer requires a deep understanding of the needs, perceptions, preferences, reference groups and behavioural patterns of the target audience and the tailoring of messages, media costs and facilities, to make changing easy. He/she should be aware of the conceptual framework of social marketing, and its limitations.

### *Distinguishing Features*

The crucial features that distinguish social behaviour marketing from product and service marketing are that in the latter there are two types:

- (1) money is paid by the consumer for something he/she can personally consume  
and
- (2) the marketing entity has a major interest in maximising its own returns.

Social behaviour marketing, by definition, indicates that the marketer is primarily

motivated by a desire to benefit others. This type of marketing is, therefore, 'most customer centered'. Paradoxically, the recipients often feel it is less customer centered and more marketer centered. For example, the family planning social marketing campaign is often dismissed as propaganda efforts by the government. The viewers are sceptical about the motive behind the message and the campaign impact is limited.

Although social behaviour marketing attempts to harness the insights of behavioural sciences in the task of social change, its power to bring about change is limited. This is especially so if the target audience has an 'investment value' in the behavioural pattern, for example, a campaign asking for equal rights/treatment for women is likely to have minimal impact with male chauvinists. In comparison, a campaign to save petrol will have a better impact.

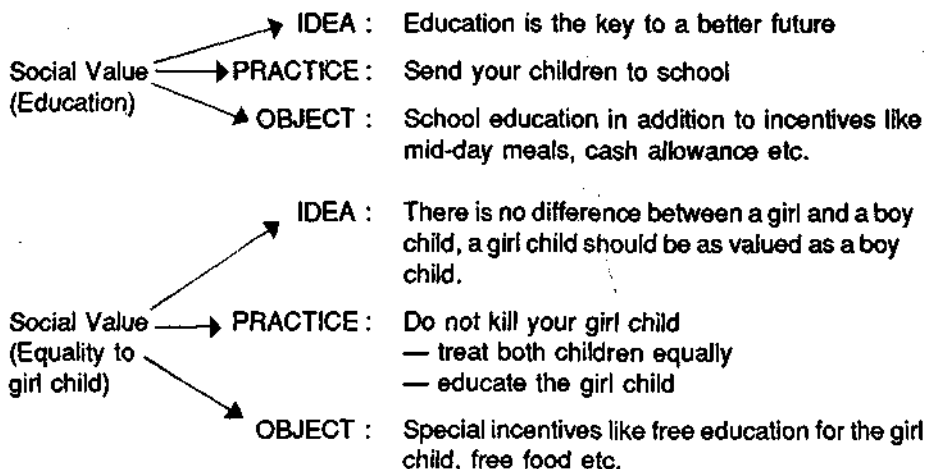
For a campaign to succeed, a variety of measures and person to person follow-up are important. For example, for the family planning campaign to have been successful, it should have been backed by mass awareness of the benefits of family planning, intensive counselling, street plays, free and easy access of contraceptives and so on.

### *Social Marketing Process*

When a worker wishes to use the social behaviour marketing model as a tool for awareness raising, his or her first task is to identify the social value that is to be promoted and then determine the strategy for translating the idea into practice.

Illustration 1 depicts this concept with reference to education and equality in rearing of the girl child.

### **Illustration 1**



### *Core Elements*

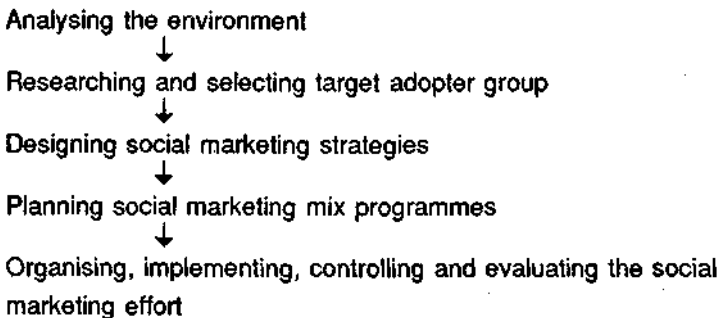
The core elements of a social marketing campaign are, the cause, the change agent, the target adopters, the channels and the change strategy. The principal focus of the marketing strategy is to motivate parents to welcome the birth of a girl child, treat both their children equally, and to educate the girl child. The underlying message being that the female offspring can be as 'valuable' as a male offspring.

The government can be viewed as the primary change agent. International and national organisations who have promoted the concept of 'the girl child' could be viewed as secondary change agents. The two groups of target adopters are the parents and the extended family, especially the grandparents. The primary channels of communication used are mass media mainly television and radio. The change strategy involves, promoting the ideology of human dignity irrespective of the gender. Through this, the campaign hopes to bring about an attitudinal change in the population wherein both children are treated equally.

### *Main Steps*

The main steps involved in the social marketing process are: analysing the environment; researching and selecting the target adopter population; designing social marketing strategies; planning social marketing mix programmes; organising, implementing, controlling and evaluating the social marketing efforts.

### **Illustration 2**



*Analysing the Social Marketing Environment:* This involves researching the environment to learn about the market and the probable effectiveness of alternative marketing approaches. Social advertising will amount to a shot in the dark unless it is preceded by careful market research. Therefore, while designing the campaign on the girl child, the marketeers will have researched the following:

- the factors contributing towards poor treatment of the girl child,
- what type of 'product marketing'/advertising will appeal to the audience,
- what is the desired change as visualised by social activists and the government.

*Researching and Selecting the Target Adopter Population:* This step is very essential for maximising the campaign effect. The target adopter population for the campaign on the girl child comprises of parents and the extended family. The primary focus is the rural population.

The social marketers should have researched to gather information about the socio-demographic characteristics, psychological profile and behavioural characteristics of the target adopters.

*Designing Social Marketing Strategies:* The social marketing strategy specifies the game plan for achieving the objectives of the social marketing campaign which includes determining the objectives to be achieved and stating criteria for evaluation. The following is an example.

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
	(related on adopter behaviour actions and manifestations)
equal treatment for both sexes	equal admission and attendance rate in schools for boys and girls
	similar nutritional status.

This helps the social marketer determine effectiveness of the campaign and evaluate what stage the target adopter is at. It also helps the marketer to determine expenditures.

A change in the attitude towards the girl child through the Social Behavioural Model could be as follows:

<i>Management Task</i>	<i>Step</i>	<i>Target Adopters Change/Stage</i>
Education	1	Understand that both children should be treated equally
	2	Girl child as important or as 'valuable' as boy child
Value Change	3	Not opposed to equal treatment
Attitude Change	4	Positive response towards birth of girl child and/or better treatment
	5	Send girl child to school and regular attendance and low drop out.
Motivate to act	6	Equal nourishment for both children
	7	No dowry
	8	No female infanticide etc.
	9	Continue equal treatment

Train and Reinforce

Targets for each stage and budget expenditure will have to be set accordingly.

*Planning the Social Marketing Mix:* The choice of an advertising agency is important for a social marketing programme, the selection shall be based on experience of the advertising agency.

When designing, the agency should keep in mind the target adopter, factors perpetuating poor treatment of the girl child and myths to be broken.

The promotion mix consists of four important components. These are mass communication, selective communication, personal communication and promotion incentives.

Mass communication includes, television, radio and the print media. All these means of communication should be conveying a consistent message.

Selective communication includes documentaries, video tapes, cable television and special screening of films. This form of communication is essential to substantiate the message communicated via mass media. Selective communication is an effective tool to communicate the campaign message to rural audiences (having a high video viewership) and communities.

Personal communication is essential for one-to-one reinforcement of the campaign message. The various methods of personal communication are:

- case work (individual communication)
- group work or training programmes
- rap groups
- street plays or folk theatre followed by discussions
- mass rallies attended by famous personalities, talking about the subject

Promotion incentives are bonuses/motivators for individuals who translate the idea into action. For example, Rs.100/- was paid to individuals undergoing sterilisation.

*Organising, Implementing, Controlling and Evaluating the Social Marketing Effort:* This includes budget allocation in terms of the four P's — product, price, place and promotion. The social product is equal/better treatment to the girl child. The price would include campaign costs and incentive costs. The place may be school, household or day care centres. The promotion aspect has been discussed earlier.

The evaluation of this campaign could be calculated in terms of school registration attendance and via measurement of weight/height and so on at Primary Health Centres. If no substantial change is indicated a re-evaluation of the campaign will be essential. Target adopter feedback about the campaign is also an important criterion for evaluation.

## The Role of Media for Raising Public Awareness

Now let us look at the role that the media have played and can play in terms of conveying knowledge and attitude about family life. It seems that much of the agitational work raising family issues such as wife beating and dowry, was achieved through effective street plays, or holding *morchas*, demonstrations, etc. after an atrocity was committed. Posters on these issues, or slogans gave voice to activist work. The main target of such programmes have been the grass roots. In other words, activists took to the streets, whenever they could organise themselves, and the work of awareness raising was restricted to these occasional, sporadic events during celebrations of Women's day, or other appropriate times. Such grass root level work, excluded a vast majority — it did not address itself to the section in charge of creating media images. In short, makers of media, people who are forming opinions at the macro level are not aware of the political implications of violence to women. Nor are their fundamental assumptions correct. As a result, we are constantly bombarded with family images that have no bearing on social reality. There is no group, or organisation to call the bluff on media humbug. In film after film, or ad after ad, we get images that contradict reality.

Media options for raising public awareness are as follows:

- cinema
- television
- radio
- advertisement
- video magazines
- theatre
- visual arts — posters, photography, painting, audio visuals
- street theatre and performing art
- print media
- psycho-drama
- demonstrations
- campaigning through print, audio tapes, or other media

Their role in influencing images is discussed below.

### *Cinema*

Cinema can be broken up into three or four distinct sections. The most powerful, with a national outreach, are Hindi language films in the commercial circuit. It is here that we get the most blatantly sexist images. Commercial cinema is notorious for creating and maintaining stereotypes. It also reinforces orthodox, sometimes, rigid views. Films such as 'Pati Parmeshwar', 'Maang Bharo Sajana', reinstate the image of a feet-worshipping, passive wife. Attempts to 'ban' these films can be corrected only with positive alternatives through other media images. The Indian new wave directors have ostensibly taken to "women's" themes. These are not above

suspicion. Firstly, taking up women's subjects, is a clear sign of toeing the official line. The Government approves of propaganda for the backward and oppressed class. Women fall within that framework. Thus it is convenient to aim at national prizes, on the basis of an approved subject. Moreover, many of the films in this generation present a fatalistic world view. 'Dasi' is only one example in that direction. In 'Dasi' or 'Kamla Ki Maut', there is an inherent negative message — anyone born female is doomed to suffer. Few films, therefore, project reality.

### *Documentaries*

It is only documentaries that express any measure of truth. Whether it is a woman's subject or a film on the Bhopal gas tragedy, documentary directors objectively present reality 'as it is'. True, the government sponsored documentaries stoop to aggressively propagating the official point of view. However, independent film makers have taken hold of certain subjects, to present reality. The documentary film is thus a powerful means of raising public awareness.

### *Short Films*

Short Films is another area, where effective public awareness is possible. In fact, the government and many advertisement agencies have 'public service cells'. Through this cell, films on public interest are made. These films are then shown on Doordarshan, and circulated on video. Though most commonly, it is through Doordarshan that these films are distributed.

Issues of civic importance, on environment, or communal harmony, have been made for public service. We have campaigns that are extremely sensitive, from this kind of media. One positive example is a campaign on urbanisation. The visual in one campaign was of a concrete highrise building. At the base is a one line message which simply states: 'Mummy, is that a tree?'. The visual, with this simple base line captures the threat of overurbanisation, beautifully.

Public service films on women, however, leave much to be desired. One film showed a pregnant woman, about to eat her meal. Another woman counsels the pregnant woman, "You must now have a wholesome diet". Next we see what a wholesome diet comprises of. This film was criticised by women's groups who rightly objected to the focus on 'now'. It clearly implied that only pregnant women have the right to a 'wholesome' meal. It is in instances like this that makers of public service films, need to be shown various perspectives.

The advertisement media is full of mischief and continues to project blatantly sexist images of women. To sell a car or a detergent, the female anatomy is used as a peg. Exploring female sexuality has been a favourite advertisement technique. Since advertisers, or agencies who have multinational clients control all media — both government or non-government — they are the most powerful of all. It is virtually an empire, impregnable as far as social activists are concerned. Besides, 'activist' is a

'dirty' password for the people in the media. They view women's activists as trouble-makers. Making inroads into this closely guarded empire requires grit and fully tested means.

The performing arts or the plastic arts on the other hand, have been always supporting social progress as do writers, poets and serious journalists, from the print media.

One of the most important awareness programmes currently being done, is the dance 'Sakti' by Darpana Dance Academy (Ahmedabad). This 90 minute programme capsules historical moments in the women's movement. These include the Chipko movement, and the tragedy of the Kerala sisters, among others. The post-independence era has seen some brilliant work on the stage with socially purposeful theatre. World famous dancers like Uday Shankar tackled the difficult subject of untouchability through dance drama. Secularism was another important subject taken as themes in many of these post-independence cultural programmes. Thus progressive ideals were made the content of drama, dance, poetry, painting, in almost every generation.

We find extremely revolutionary songs from the rich treasury of folk music in every language. These traditional songs, written to rouse people's social conscience, have long been forgotten — or replaced by hybrid film culture. Many revolutionary songs need to be revived for the younger generation. Music and dance form an integral part of cultural progress. Both these lend themselves ideally as vehicles of social change.

Today, media options are many and the electronic media is truly a powerful force. However, it is easy to be deceived by spectacular media images, or swayed by emotive messages. While the government controlled media preaches secularism and national integrity, a proliferation of non-government media, particularly those sponsored by big business houses, spread a fundamentalist right wing and communal virus. There is no control over this kind of media. Many media experts feel the future belongs to this powerful, private media, and have justified grievances about the mischief that can be caused.

Living in an advanced capitalist state — we are principally consumers. Our lives and politics are controlled by the media. In turn those who control this all-powerful communication network, are not necessarily above board. It is extremely important to achieve some checks on the excesses of media. Not by way of censorship, for censorship has proved a self-defeating mechanism. What could be recommended to the government is groups comprised of sensitive individuals, drawn from a cross-section of persons of standing such as writers, journalists and media experts. These small groups could effectively intervene any programme before it is publicly released on media. The group must ideally be autonomous, and act as the people's representative.



If cells like this are created within the framework of advertisement agencies, *Doordarshan* (T.V.), and radio, a two-tier system may function on an experimental basis. The whole exercise is to make people at the helm of media, creative heads, filmmakers, producers and editors, accountable. The perceptions of these important functionaries within the media network have to be reviewed seriously. Besides, the cell is not to be treated as a watchdog, but a support bulwark, providing expertise democratically, for a greater unity of vision within the media. Therefore, the work of raising public awareness, is essentially targeted at two sections, the public, and those engaged in public service — including the whole spectrum of media.

### **Group Discussions**

One very important element of raising public awareness, is an experiential communication. Using art forms such as street plays, theatre, music, films, is one way of communication, but it remains distant if no discussions are organised after the performance is over. Use of the media along with discussions is definitely effective for stimulating a resocialisation process. Another way is involving people themselves, to reflect upon their own life, to encourage them to analyse it. Group discussions and workshops are techniques developed by psychologists, as a part of social work and personnel management disciplines. It assumes a certain acceptance from the people you are going to work with. The third, and more indirect method is to evolve a programme where dialogues based on experiences are encouraged. It can be organised both ways, formally and informally, in family gatherings or at picnics, with friends or at annual gatherings of neighbours.

In the following text, two experiences are presented of these kinds of programmes along with a list of other programmes some of us have organised successfully on raising awareness about family life.

#### *Formal Programmes*

##### *Sahajeevan* (Coexistence)

Dialogue with divorcees.

*Nate Raktache, Nate Maitreeche* (Kinship relations versus relations through friendships).

##### *Sahajeevan: Coexistence*

The programme was organised by a middle class women's group to celebrate the International Women's Day. The idea was to make people question whether there exists equality and a nurturing attitude between husband and wife in daily life on various counts. In fact, the name of the programme was carefully chosen to reflect the progressive stand that marriage is not a legal entity, but something much more, a companionship transcending the contractual relationship.

Six couples were chosen on two criteria; firstly, that they were willing to share their life with others, and secondly that they were from different backgrounds, such as both the partners working, wife not working, husband not working, belonging to different generations etc.

A panel of three persons was chosen for discussing their relationship in three main areas of life: economic, social and emotional. The questions were fielded on the floor as optional, to create an atmosphere of chatting rather than making the speakers conscious and uncomfortable.

The questions on the social dimension began by an obvious enquiry whether their marriage was an arranged one or the one after 'falling in love' with each other. What were the criteria used to choose a partner? Did the bride change her maiden name, including surname, or insisted on keeping it? The young wife had retained her maiden name and was ready to give an explanation for the same. The old couple could throw light on the practices of their times and took pride in narrating the small rebellions such as marrying into another sect of the same caste, which became an issue at that time.

Assessing economic equality was the difficult part as there was scepticism about how speakers would take it. It was important to evaluate the status of the non-working spouse. Did she/he feel insecure? Who owns the house? What was the arrangement thought out in case of dispute? Who took the decision for allocation of family income? Could any one of them tell us any small incident which hurt her/him or revealed that she/he lacked power and was taken for granted? Who spent money for the maternity expenses? Thus areas of having real equality, not just the professed one, were thrashed out. Fortunately, the speakers, men and women were very free and came out with a number of anecdotes, showing that the process of equality was an evolutionary one, and through experiences they became aware of many small issues that are important.

Emotional equality was the most challenging area for the interviewers. Sharing about one's private life in public is a difficult task. The simple question was were there any periods of intense disagreements, on what issues, and how did they solve them. Among the various issues which were presented, the issue of the love triangle was the most sensational, but the way it was solved, displayed all the possibilities of a mature relationship between husband and wife.

The programme was meant for a mixed audience and 250 people were present. The response was lively, which was reflected in the way a few questions were raised from the audience, which was totally involved. It went on for two and a half hours.

### *Informal Programmes*

Relationship between parents and children  
Dialogue across the generations  
Discussion about marriage ceremonies

*Relations between Parents and Children*

One informal programme is chosen to convey the spirit of this kind of dialogue. It was an occasion to celebrate the recovery of a person from a heart surgery. His only daughter (a doctor) had slogged and other relatives had offered blood and other kinds of help during his illness. All the relatives were together. Instead of the usual gossiping we thought why not understand what our children have to say about our bringing-up practices. The parents and children of one family came to the floor one by one and one of us took the position for monitoring. Anybody was free to raise questions, criticising a particular style of that specific parent couple, demanding explanations, or asking the children to react. Too blunt a question was discarded by the monitoring person, or sometimes it was properly worded and fielded. The important element in the situation was that there was a sufficient number of children who were mature enough to reflect upon their early childhood experience, as well as bold enough to speak about contemporary events, such as developing a love relationship and attitude showed by parents. The event really brought out the wide range of attitudes and values that the parents and children were nurturing.

It was interesting to see how perceptions of the same behaviour differ. The parents who felt that they gave freedom to the children, were criticised for being so self indulgent and busy leading their own social life that they did not pay enough attention to the children.

Another important question raised was whether children suffer because of contradictory practices of parents regarding how to rear a child. Did daughters feel that they were discriminated against? Were parents too possessive and did they impose their wills regarding careers on the children? How much freedom did the children enjoy especially regarding friendships?

In the discussions which followed as a part of the answering sessions, many rules or values were established as guiding principles for the younger parents. Many issues were thrashed out, such as the balance between indulgence, authoritarian behaviour and nurturing guidance. Patterns of socialisation, especially subtle gender socialisation, also emerged.

A general observation is that extremely deviant cases do not feel free to share their problems or experiences in these gatherings, but reasonable contradictions do emerge and instead of getting embarrassed, there is a sense of relief. Very rarely, the contradictions do become explosive, if either of the parties is not sportive enough, and takes it as a humiliation.

In one of the family gatherings, panel interviews were conducted of a group of people belonging to the same generation. Thus daughters-in-law got a chance to complain about the mothers-in-law across the generations. Personal curiosity about the behaviour of very modern couples in the family was satisfied by a lot of younger people. The atmosphere became much more relaxed after these sessions.

## **Intensive Awareness Raising**

Women and men need to be organised in separate groups, also known as rap groups, for this purpose. This kind of group emerged in the West in a spontaneous manner, at the beginning of the women's movement. Students on the university campuses, or women colleagues of radical organisations, neighbourhood women, came together and shared their daily life experiences of men, in various capacities. It was the most liberal, radical period after the reconstruction of the economies damaged in the Second World War had taken place. The aspirations for equality and freedom were running high among women along with other minorities, such as blacks and migrants. Women had realised that a corresponding response from men was lacking. Sharing their experiences of individual life, helped women to shift their anger from individual men to inherent structural problems of inequality. Women could see the subtle oppression inherent in the role of a housewife, however nice a husband they had. Thus these sessions operated at two levels; for a harrassed woman, they gave courage to speak out and seek remedies, for some other women, frustrated, they motivated looking for root causes of women's specific oppression

The technique used was narration of self testimonies. It was very difficult for women to talk about their private life, particularly, because in the industrialised countries, individualism has been associated with the concept of sanctity of privacy. Another barrier was the idea of romantic love, which nobody would like to betray. In India, the situation among the middle class women is a little different. Instead of privacy, one is worried about the family honour. Also, there are very few options open for a harrassed woman. Still, one notices that aspirations for equality are increasing. The technique of self testimonies can be used here too, which helps women to sort out what they can do with the limited options open to them in their life.

At least one group of men has come together in Pune and started the rap group technique, to probe into their own lives and to critically examine their own process of gender socialisation. It is a very novel idea, because the oppressed are more likely to come together to redress their grievances, but the dominant group does not find it necessary to be critical towards their own existence. Here the basis for coming together for these men is that they feel oppressed because of a burden of their masculine identity. They organised a small workshop for college students and made them reflect upon their attitude towards their female colleagues, including the kind of language they used to talk about them, or the way they looked at female students passing by while standing at the corner. The exercise revealed the sex object attitude of the male students who felt ashamed of it. The best part was that men, especially of their age, had organised the workshop, and hence a sharing atmosphere could be maintained.

Why, when, and how to use these formal and informal group discussions is the major issue. The different elements which are essential ingredients of these techniques have to be thrashed out.

The students should be made aware that a certain maturity in terms of judgements of various personalities, as well as an understanding of the issues is necessary to monitor such programmes. How to maintain the rationalistic and reflective ethos of these discussions, without allowing people to set sentimental, is the skill which is most needed.

### Methods of Teaching/Learning

1. Part of the course content could be communicated through lectures.
2. A particular media campaign may be presented followed by discussion.
3. Role play may be conducted on how to conduct group discussions for raising public awareness.

### Teaching Aids

1. Audio-visuals  
(a collection of TV snippets of family planning and girl child) followed by discussion.
2. Creative literature  
Discuss newspaper articles with reference to the message they convey.

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