

Chapter VI. IDENTIFICATION, CLASSIFICATION, AND SELECTION OF NEEDS

Introduction

Having studied the Mahila Mandals, the members, and the environment in which the mandals function, it is now necessary to identify their needs. Once the needs are identified and classified, then only can one proceed to the next step viz. devising a training programme to meet the needs.

Definition of Need

According to the dictionary (1), a need is a 'necessity,' 'a state that requires relief'. A psychologist may talk about primary and secondary needs and link it to drive and motive. Maslow talks about a hierarchy of needs and links it to motivation.(2).

For the purpose of this research a need is taken to mean the following :

- (a) A desire to obtain relief from some adverse circumstances.
- (b) A desire to improve some area of personal or social life.
- (c) A desire to remove conceptual doubts about one's rights, obligations and place in society.

Needs are not wants. Thus when during an interview the member said that she 'needs' a sewing machine, it has been ignored as a personal want. But when the chairperson of a mandal said that a sewing machine was needed so that more women would become members or tailoring classes could be held, this was heeded - the need for a sewing machine really representing the needs for developing the mandal.

It should also be recognised that in a particular social or economic situation or level the needs are influenced and even determined by various considerations such as :

- (a) Level of people's own awareness of their environment.
- (b) Availability of resources.
- (c) Level of development achieved elsewhere and which is known to the people and acts as a motivator.
- (d) The perception of planners and decision makers. (3)

It is in the light of the above that the needs of the women were identified.

Identification of Needs

How is need recognised, or identified, or found out ? The most obvious method is to ask a direct question " What is your need ? " The response given to the researcher varied a great deal. The two extremes were :

(a) " I want a gas connection."

and

(b) " I don't want anything - I am content with what God has given me."

In the first case the emphasis on "I" may be noted. In the second case the fatalistic approach - the opiate - is to be noted. Within this range the responses varied a great deal and a lot of sifting and analysis had to be done.

The researcher could, however, see for herself that there were, indeed, a great many needs. When a respondent was reluctant to talk, or was at a loss for words, help had to be extended. Thus, when a woman was shy, or did not speak or could not think of what to say, a question " Don't you think a sewing machine will enable you to clothe your children properly and earn a little money ? " brought an immediate response. The answer was not only an enthusiastic " yes " but a lot more came pouring out - of how nobody pays attention to such problems, of how Mahila Mandals showed no interest and so on. However, it should be emphasised that the researcher avoided leading questions as far as possible. Sometimes it was necessary to go to some other topic and come

back to the original point in a round about way.

In some cases the researcher could see a need but the women were not prepared to admit it or put it forward, because it might have meant saying something against their husband or family or acknowledge their own weakness. For example it will be seen from Table No. IV. 45. that only 87 or 29.19 % women said that their husbands drank ; and only 4 or 1.35 % said that their husbands drank and ill treated them. This is palpably wrong. The need for prohibition and an agitation against wife-beating is not only a very real one, but also a very urgent one. Similarly a woman may feel very reluctant to talk about her husband taking a second wife, or keeping a concubine, because it would mean her inability to 'hold' her husband. But the need to enforce the laws relating to bigamy is a very real one.

To sum up, the researcher had to determine the need not only by, and from, the responses given but also by personal observation and reference to records of other observers.

Classification of Needs

Needs can be classified by various methods. For example, the following classification can be given :

- (a) Normative Needs. The objective minimum needs without the satisfaction of which development would be hampered.
- (b) Felt Needs. The subjective minimum needs of the individual.
- (c) Expressed Needs. Demands, usually a long list of wants not intimately related to the Normative Needs.
- (d) Comparative Needs. Needs of a group. (4)

Needs can also be classified in the following ways:

- (a) According to the field - social, educational, economic etc. in which the need falls.
- (b) According to whether the need is personal or institutional.

Chapters III, IV, and V have covered the needs as expressed by the Mandals, the Members and those felt by the village as a whole. An analysis of the basic data contained therein, and sifting where necessary, provides the following tables.

Table No. VI. 01.

Distribution of Members According to Their Training Needs.

| Sr. | Training Needs | Number | Percentage |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Home management. | 3 | 0.86 |
| 2. | Child care and management. | 7 | 2.00 |
| 3. | Financial management. | 3 | 0.86 |
| 4. | Primary occupation. | 51 | 14.57 |
| 5. | Secondary occupation. | 93 | 26.57 |
| 6. | Live-stock management. | 38 | 10.86 |
| 7. | Functional literacy. | 71 | 20.28 |
| 8. | Vocational guidance. | 59 | 16.86 |
| 9. | No Training required/undecided | 25 | 7.14 |
| | TOTAL | 350 | 100.00 |
| | n: 350 | M = 38.89 | SD = 30.32 |

These needs were expressed by the members either at the time of answering the questionnaire or at Mahila Mandal meetings.

Although there were multi-responses, sifting was done, and where necessary the ground was gone over again with the members, to record the needs felt most by the respondents. A strict priority cannot be laid down.

As far as the Mahila Mandals were concerned, the overall position is as given in the table below.

Table No. VI. 02.

Distribution of Mahila Mandals According to Training Needs.

| Sr. | Training Needs | Number | Percentage |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------|------------|
| 1. | Management of Mahila Mandals. | 17 | 48.57 |
| 2. | Awareness generation. | 10 | 28.57 |
| 3. | Income generating schemes. | 6 | 17.15 |
| 4. | Building and infra-structure. | 2 | 5.71 |
| | TOTAL | 35 | 100.00 |
| | n: 35 | M = 8.75 | SD = 5.53 |

Here also there were multi-responses but sifting was done to determine the need most felt. The need for more funds is a universal and perpetual one and has been ignored for the purpose of this research.

Taking a overall view and considering all the factors, the following may be viewed as the most important and pressing needs.

Members.

- (a) Awareness about the role of Mahila Mandals.
- (b) Training in home management.
- (c) Vocational training and guidance on income generating schemes.
- (d) Information and guidance on laws relating to women.
- (e) Solving the acute water shortage problem.
- (f) Prohibition or imposing some form of control over alcoholism.
- (g) Continuing and functional education.
- (h) Emotional support from the Mandal.
- (i) Guidance on modern agricultural methods.

/ (j) Information

- (j) Information and guidance on various welfare schemes.
- (k) Better sanitation and hygiene. Provision of toilets, and proper sewage and drainage.
- (l) Better use of electricity at home.
- (m) Awareness of woman's place and status in society and her role in development.
- (n) Better child and health care.
- (o) Improvements in communication and transportation.

Mahila Mandals.

- (a) Own building with sanitary block.
- (b) Training in management of Mahila Mandals and book-keeping.
- (c) Electricity and water for the mandal.
- (d) Facilities for taking classes like black-board, books, charts etc.
- (e) Items and equipment for the mandals as decided by the members and not by officials.
- (f) Training in handi-crafts, vocational guidance and such schemes where the Mahila Mandal can actively participate as an institution.

Selection of Needs for the Training Programme

It is obvious that needs like building, light, water, etc., cannot be met by a training programme. It is also clear that certain needs such as functional literacy were out of reach of an individual researcher. The constraints of time and resources had also to be taken into account.

It has been explained that to overcome some of the difficulties the researcher decided to associate herself with a voluntary agency - the Academy for Education and Youth Services, based at Pune. The voluntary agency also had somewhat similar constraints. After considerable deliberations, in which the views

of the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) had to be perforce given a place (this has been explained in the next chapter) the following four needs (subjects) were chosen for the training programme.

- (a) Training in Mahila Mandal Organisation and Administration.
- (b) Guidance and Information on Laws Relating to Women.
- (c) Guidance and Information Relating to Welfare Schemes.
- (d) Awareness Generation.

The researcher acknowledges that there were many other topics such as motivation and creation of local leadership which would have been of great value to the Mahila Mandals and its members, but which could not be taken or included due to the constraints of time, resources and bias.

REFERENCES

- (1) Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary. 1987. Ed.
- (2) Davis Keith. Human Behavior at Work. 1978. pp. 39 - 57.
- (3) Mishra R.P. and Sunderam K.V. Multi Level Planning and Integrated Rural Development in India. 1980. p. 139.
- (4) Op Cit. p. 195.