

ON THE QUESTION OF FAMILY PLANNING

DR. S. K. ADHICARI, Calcutta

Family Planning? ... Yes, the cry of the day. But what is Family Planning? It is, to my mind, to help medically a married couple to have an issue who do not have any as well as to help them to limit the birth of children who are unwanted with reference to family economy as well as in consideration of health of the parents. With the affluent society or affluent family, more the birth, all the merrier, barring of course the health hazards.

The other day, I was hearing one of my friends, Dr. Dinabandhu Banerjee, an advocate of family planning and a well-known gynaecologist of our time. He said that family planning dates back to 1918 when it was called as *wise parenthood*. The oldest birth control clinic in the world was opened by Marie Stopes (London) on the 17th of March 1921. Then came the wordings—planned parenthood, constructive birth control, family planning, family regulation, family planning and children, conception control and contraception, tubectomy and vasectomy and now down to '*ham do, hamara do*', a very popular catch words with many.

These different wordings bearing almost the same meaning, and quite a number of well-intended personalities worked and have been working for the well-being of the posterity. Well, I do not question anybody's intention. What my question is, *family planning is meant for whom?* Of course, I feel, everybody will agree that it is only intended for married couples. If that be so, the first thing should be to educate them in the new orientation of life and stop the legion of unmarried men and women to lascivious indulgence. The publicity made through the press, platforms and radios, falls far short of the real intention of the family planning for a future prosperous society. Because when you publicly advertise or give vent to your feelings that such and such measures will help you to enjoy sexually without its awful fruits, will ultimately sanction a licence to the thousands of unmarried persons suffering from nymphomania or satyriasis which, in turn, will turn into a licence which is bound to break the moral fibre of the society, the slogan unofficially may turn into this: "Get on to this, There is no risk".

So, my friends, I have a concrete suggestion to offer (why should I get the prerogative to say I?...many might have thought or felt likewise). The suggestion is, when family planning is only intended for the married couples, all marriages, whatever be the conventional form must ultimately be compulsorily registered and that compulsory registration should be tied with the inheritance of property. It is a stern measure, no doubt, but without this stern measure, our socio-economic and cultural set up, would even make compulsory registrations a failure.

Now, to make the family planning programme a success, in each

marriage registration office, a physician should be attached who has the requisite knowledge about family planning and he should be able to explain why it is a necessity, rather a *must* for all married couples of our country as a whole. If we can do so, we can do away with the juvenile delinquents who, in the meantime, due to the advertisements and radio broadcasts have been indulging in illicit sexual intercourse and openly saying 'enjoy and no pregnancy...use *nirodh* only, available even in groceries'. In this connection, I tell you, my friends, what I personally observed a few years back. It was a Christmas day and a lovely daughter of one of my friends with her mother had been out to purchase a cake. Where the cakes were beautifully shown, there was a festoon attached with the table where the cakes were displayed, '*akhane nirod paya ja*', meaning 'here *nirodh* is available'. The lovely young daughter did not attain her puberty, yet she asked her mother that she intended to purchase *nirodh* cake but the shop-keeper offered her other cakes but not the one he is advertising. Was it that, the very good cakes are already sold out? And therefore, he (pointing out to the salesman) is canvassing other cakes?. The lovely young daughter's mother was flabbergasted and in a motherly way told her ward that the cake was intended for the adults and rebuked the salesman as well as the shop-keeper about their idiocy. This is happening with many in our country. When we intend to convince the married couples, let us convince them in a place of convenience and not in public and that is why, I offer the suggestion for compulsory registration with a physician attached to marriage registration office with the afore-said responsibilities.

Now about Homoeopathy and family planning—Is Pregnancy a disease? Whether, he is a man living on ivory tower, or a physician or a layman, will agree that it is not so. At best, it can be said that the population explosion may be viewed as a condition that may tantamount to a social disease threatening to upset many intended good. What is the role of a homoeopath, both as a man with social consciousness and as a medical man? What is the arena of homoeopaths, to treat natural diseases. Is it not?. What is a disease? Is it not the derangement of the vital principle that make itself known through signs and symptoms? To homoeopaths, is it not a fact that what a drug can cause in the healthy, can cure a similar in the sick? Is it not a fact that only one straight line can be drawn in between the two points?

Disease that may arise out of mechanical means, deranging the vital principle, releasing a chain of signs and symptoms, if properly evaluated, may very successfully be treated by homoeopaths. Here alone only Homoeopathy is a great admiral and may also be a great adjutant to the measures taken up by the other school, and homoeopaths can do a lot to mitigate the traumatic reactions that may follow after vasectomy or tubectomy or after regular use of oral pills and/or contraceptives. Yes, one with the knives on to do the intended good, the other is to soothe the deranged vital principle, if that is needed. This would go a long way towards successful

implementation of the family planning programme. But I would categorically stand against homoeopaths who, (as some of my erudite young brotherlike colleagues) suggest that, homoeopaths, too can take to vasectomy or tubectomy.

In fact, the sky is very large and often experience that we are caught in between the devil (now, the devil is population explosion) and the deep sea (the unknown aftermath) as my friend Dinabandhu frankly told us that no measures have yet been found flawless. Yes, Dinabandhu, it is because individualisation is the acme of Homoeopathy for nature does not allow us to be cogs of a wheel. For homoeopaths, there is no blanket coverage and psychosomatic conditions rank high with us.

—*Souvenir, W. B. State Homoeo. Practitioners' Conference,
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