

TRAINING OF VILLAGE LEADERS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SHOPAL (A QUICK STUDY), 1954

1. The Study

Development authorities in Bhopal initiated a project of training 'village leaders' who could be of some assistance to the developmental staff, especially the VLW, in their extension activities. Since it was felt that a brief initial survey of the project would be of some interest, some officers of PEO were specially deputed to Bhopal to carry out a quick survey in August 1954. Results of the survey were presented in two parts. The first part carried description of programme in Bhopal and second part contained general observations based on Bhopal experience.

2. Objectives

To ascertain the views of the trained leaders, the VLWs and a certain number of selected villagers on the functions and role of the leaders, the work done by them so far, their relationship with the project staff and the reactions of the trainees and the people towards this whole programme.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for selection of Sample

The study was based on detailed discussions with the Development Commissioner, the Project Executive officer and the Chief Social Education organiser of the Bhopal Community Project on the training programmes. Besides these, an intensive study of the work of village leaders was made in selected five villages. The choice of villages was based on largely by considerations of accessibility. within these limitations, the villages were selected where the leaders, work had been successful as well as those where it had not been successful.

In each of the selected villages, the trained leader, the VLW and a certain number of villagers were interviewed. A total of 15 out of the 28 leaders trained in the first camp were interviewed.

4. Reference Period

The quick survey was carried out in August, 1954.

5. **Main Findings**

1. In Bhopal, the main **criteria adopted** for selection of trainees were their progressive outlook and enthusiasm for development work.

2. Most of the trainees in Bhopal were of the cultivating class and the majority belonged to the more substantial land owning families of the higher castes.

3. It was noticed in some of the villages in Bhopal that the faction to which a trainee belonged cooperated with him, while the others did not.

4. In the case of the Bhopal Camp, mostly youngmen ranging in age from 18 to 30 years were selected. The 'real leaders of the community and the persons who make decisions were middle and advanced age group, seldom below 30 and often above 40 years in age. Their selection for training programme of this type was not practicable because of their pre-occupation in numerous activities and were not subjected to discipline of a training course.

5. In the Bhopal Camp, training was primarily the responsibility of Social Education staff.

6. **Major Suggestions**

1. Special efforts. should be made to draw persons from the lower economic and social groups into the programme of training for village Leadership. Instead of selecting only one person from a village, selection should be made so as to include representatives from the different groups in the village.

2. For training programmes of this **type**, although younger people with enthusiasm are the most suitable, yet any of the older men who are suitable and willing to join should not be excluded on grounds of age.

3. The need for maintaining effective contact between the Project Staff and the trained Leaders cannot be too strongly emphasised. In the case of Bhopal, no definite arrangements have been made for this and contact is expected to be maintained through the VLWs who is the most important medium of contact between these leaders and the project. But the Project officers should make it a point to contact these leaders , along with other programme farmers in each village, and acquaint themselves with their work and problems when they go out

on their tours. Short reorientation courses of two or three days duration should be organised for them from time to time.

4. It was felt that this training should not be the concern of the social education staff alone. All the subject matter specialists on the project staff including the Development Commissioner and the Collector down to the village worker should be fully associated with it.