

A Study on the Shremukh Swanirvar Village

(Published in August, 1988)

a) Researchers' Identity

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b) Objectives

The study was conducted to know the present situation of the Shawnirvar Programme at Shremukh Shawnirvar village with the following objectives in mind:

- i. To study the organizational structure of Shremukh Shawnirvar Village;
- ii. To find out the socio-economic information of the leaders involved in the programme;
- iii. To study the role, functions of the shawnirvar leaders and their views in implementing the programme with particular emphasis on family planning programme in the village; and
- iv. And finally, to examine the members' perception and views about the programme in the village.

c) Executive summary

1. The study was conducted with a sample of 128 members in the village Shremukh; a Shawnirvar village under Gobindaganj Upazila in the District of Gaibandha.
2. The broad objective of the study was to examine the operation of the Shawnirvar programme in general and the family planning programme in particular. In examining the operations of the programme, the opinion of the leaders and the members towards Shawirvar Programme were taken into consideration.

3. The primary data for the study was collected by interviewing the general members and the leaders under the programme. Data on the family planning programme were collected by interviewing female members under the Shawnirvar programme of the village.
4. The Shawnirvar as much publicised programme was initiated in the study village in 1981 and it has started operating in full as one of the twenty batighar (light house) villages in 1983. In initiating the programme, the local UP chairman played a pioneering role. Until December 1987, it has been reported to have covered 80% of the total population under the programme.
5. The 60% of the leaders interviewed were in the age between 20-30 years, of whom 40% had education up to secondary level. The 80% of the leaders hold agriculture as of their principal occupation in the village and 50% of them have 2-3 acres of land.
6. With regards to the role of the leaders in terms of spending time for Shawnirvar activities, 50% of the leaders are found to have not spent any time at all for the programme. However, they spent on the average one hour per week for holding and attending weekly meetings for the shawnirvar programme.
7. The leaders appear to have no role in making decision for the programme and they had not discussed members for making plan of the programme.
8. In implementing the programme, most of the leaders mentioned that they were implemented by the members themselves.
9. The decision making of the shawnirvar programme, according to the majority of members was undemocratic and centralized nature. The decisions taken by the Chairman and Secretary of the Village Development Committee (VDC) were not considered fair by the members. Further, most of the members mentioned that whatever the decisions were taken, not implemented properly in the village.
10. Half of the participating members of the shawnirvar programme expressed that the meaning of shawnirvar was not clear to them and could not say what it really stands for. However, the members although have no perception about shawnirvar yet, they have a feeling that their joining in the programme will create a way for getting credit from the various sources in future.
11. With regards to the services and benefits made available by the programme, 88% of the members expressed to have not received any

benefits. According to them whatever the benefits available were distributed among all categories of people in the village.

12. Family Planning as a component of Shawnirvar Programme was known only to 10% of the members in the village.
13. Lack of leadership and commitment has been identified by the majority of the members as the key problems of the programme.
14. The success of family planning as claimed by the Shawnirvar Programme was not entirely due to the operation of Shawnirvar Programme in the village. But it is due to the Family Planning Department who has reported to have played a significant role for the success of the programme.

d) Conclusion

The National development of the country depends largely on the development of 68,000 villages in the country. Reaching out the vast majority by Shawnirvar Programme through Gram Sarker in the country was the chief concern of the government. In some of the villages, the Gram Sarker were formed overnight with the support of the local administration and the ruling political party which has later on created a lot of confusions among the workers of the Shawnirvar Programme, Vis-a-vis formation of Gram Sarker in the village. However, such state of affairs was neither expected nor ruled out completely. And in the meantime, when the Gram Sarker was abolished following the promulgation of the Martial Law in 1982, the shawnirvar Programme got lost. Despite the facts, the Shawnirvar movement for popular participation and mobilization of local resources for development in the villages through gram parishad below the union parishad as planned was a good step. Such programme should have continued to be extended by phases to see how it would achieve the goals and objectives of the development of the government. Unfortunately it was not tried by the government (Rahman Muksudur, P. 236, 1988).

After abolishment of the Gram Sarker, the Shawnirvar Programme was tried in a very limited scale in many of the villages of Bangladesh. Shremukh under Gobindaganj Upazila of Gaibandha District was one of the villages where under the Shawnirvar Programme as claimed the population control and family planning programme was initiated by them; which later on, proved that it was not genuine because, the local family planning department has been working in this village for quite a long time before the Shawnirvar Programme has come into picture in 1983. To the contrary, the local Shawnirvar Workers/leaders like Mr. Latif Mustafizur, Hasina, Anisa and all

others, who were involved with Shawnirvar Programme are the same people worked earlier for family planning department. Therefore, it was very difficult to draw a definite conclusion as to who has really contributed more for giving full coverage of the village under population control and family planning in the village. But certainly, the role of the local people sometimes as workers/leaders of the family planning department or the Shawnirvar programme could not be ignored. Rather they have helped the people to increase their awareness to have access to the family planning programme by themselves directed to save Bangladesh from population explosion resulted with hunger and malnutrition in many villages of the country.