Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the first chapter a social work relevant study problem was delineated and objectives of the study were specified in terms of describing association between family planning acceptance (the dependent variable) and independent variables, viz., socioeconomic status (father's education, occupation, and monthly family income), mother's status (her education and her age at marriage) and her overall individual modernity. Detailed procedures to achieve these objectives were explicated. The second chapter reviewed Social Work and Social Science literature on the problems of fertility and family planning in the larger context of socioeconomic development. Chapter third to fifth analysed the survey data. Purpose of this analysis was to summarize the data in such a manner that they yield answers to the questions posed in the objectives of the study. So far, we have not attempted an explicit interpretation to search broader meaning of the data in relation to available knowledge. For the purpose of this kind of interpretation, let us review briefly the major findings. We will try to present them in roughly ascending

order or magnitude or strength of relationships.

Tables XVIII, XIX, XXVI, XXVII, and XXVIII bring out the following conclusions :

1. Average independent effect of mother's overall individual modernity on family planning acceptance ranged from 12.5 per cent to 14.5 per cent.

2. Average independent effect of socioeconomic status on family planning acceptance ranged from 15.75 per cent to 20.5 per cent.

3. Average independent effect of mother's education on family planning acceptance ranged from 19.5 per cent to 25.5 per cent.

4. Average independent effect of mother's age at marriage on family planning acceptance ranged from 38.5 per cent to 41.5 per cent.

5. Combined, cumulative or joint effect of socioeconomic status and mother's overall individual modernity on family planning acceptance was 35 per cent (Gamma = .626).

6. Combined effect of mother's education and her overall individual modernity on family planning acceptance was 39 per cent (Gamma = .675).

7. Combined effect of mother's education and socioeconomic status on family planning acceptance was 40 per cent (Gamma = .688).

8. Combined effect of mother's age at marriage and her overall individual modernity on family planning acceptance was 54 per cent (Gamma = .816).

9. Combined effect of mother's age at marriage and her education on family planning acceptance was 58 per cent (Gamma = .873).

This summary of five tri-variate tables, makes it possible to arrange tue independent variables in order of their ability to explain variation in family planning acceptance. This order was mother's status (her age at marriage and her education), father's socioeconomic status and mother's overall individual modernity. Again, of these four variables, mother's age at marriage and her education were most crucial. Jointly they achieved the Gamma coefficient as high as .873. In terms of percentage, there were 79 per cent high F.P. acceptors among 77 mothers, who had married late and had high education. Conversely, there were only 21 per cent high F.P. acceptors among 112 mothers, who had married earlier and had low education. Thus, with the help of these two variables we are able to explain 58 per cent difference in F.P. acceptance. Only 21 per cent difference in each (total = 42%) of the two extreme groups remain to be explained.

With this summary and earlier exposition of literature,

let us raise few questions which can help us to understand
the broader meaning of the data. At the same time we should
remember the limitations of the study in terms of limited
conceptual model, atypical limited population, possible errors
in measurement and use of non-parametric statistics. With this
in mind, let us proceed to discuss few relevant and important
questions.

1.   Why individual modernity had relatively lowest association
      with Family planning acceptance?

'We will offer three explanations and will indicate as to
which aspects of these explanation sounds more plausible. The
first explanation is about stimulus-response theory. If we
assume that the modernity scale was valid in measuring the
modern personality, then, we will have to challenge the equa-
tion : $R = f (S.P.)$. We will have to say that Response or
F.P. acceptance is not the function of Socioeconomic conditions
(mother's education and her age at marriage) and Personality
factor but it is function of only socioeconomic conditions. In
other words, this explanation will suggest that the measurement
of modernity was valid but S-R theory was incorrect.

The second explanation would be reversal of the first.
For this we assume that stimulus-response equation was correct

but our measurement of modernity had low validity.

The third explanation could be that the theory was correct and our measurement of modernity was also valid but mother's earlier formal education and her present modernity were highly intertwined or intercorrelated. Mother's earlier formal education was relatively stronger among these two independent variables, however, we need not assume that the modernity was an insignificant factor. This means that controlling either of them would give us reduced correlation with the dependent variable.

The last or third explanation sounds most plausible. As can be seen from Table XXVII, when we controlled for mother's education her modernity did not make significant difference for F.P. acceptance. Similarly, when we controlled for mother's modernity, among modern mothers education had significant relation (X^2 = 25.820) with F.P. acceptance but among traditional mothers, education had lower relation (X^2 = 3.526) with F.P. acceptance. Similar (though not same) trend can be observed from Table XXVI.

. This does not mean that other explanations are not useful. In fact, they seem to supplement and complement. Take for example, second explanation regarding measurement problem.

As we have noted earlier, from about 200 questions in the
original modernity scale, we had selected only 27 questions.
This we had done to economize on time and resources.With more
resources one can perform item analysis on larger pool of
initial questions and retain only highly significant items.
This procedure would lead to higher reliability and greater
content as well as construct validity for the modernity scale.
This in turn, may result in establishing clearer status of
individual modernity and separate out conjoint influences.

2. Why socioeconomic status (father's education, occupation
    and monthly family income) had second lowest association
    with family planning acceptance?

To some extent, all the three explanations offered earlier
to explain relatively low association of individual modernity
with F.P. acceptance can also be considered for explaining low
association of socioeconomic status, however, we will first
consider the most plausible and direct one.

Let us recall that one of the purposes of the study was
to assess relative importance of father's socio-economic status
(his education, occupation, and monthly family income) in
comparison to mother's socioeconomic status (mother's education
and her age at marriage). While designing the study or more

specifically while selecting the population and the sample
for the study; we went for a group which was relatively homo-
genous in terms of socioeconomic status of father. We selected
only those Balwadies which were run by Baroda Municipal Cor-
poration Primary Education Committee. Balwadies run by other
organizations attract children from either higher or lower
socioeconomic strata. The Balwadies which we selected were
supposed to represent middle or lower middle class families.

Was it so? Let us go back to our data. Kuppuswami (1962)
had suggested five classes on the basis of socioeconomic status
score. In our data 267 respondents (93.7%) belonged to middle
(third category) or lower middle (fourth category) class.
Extremely few cases belonged to either highest (first & second)
or lowest (fifth) class.

In terms of design this meant that we were able to control
extraneous systematic variance (Kerlinger, 1973; pp.300-314), or
we were able to control the influence of the independent
variable extraneous to the purpose of the study. The result of
this procedure is very clear. We can not expect very strong
association between father's socioeconomic status and family
planning acceptance.

3. Why mother's status (her age at marriage and her education) had highest association with family planning acceptance?

First of all, as it can be seen from Table XIX, mother's age at marriage and her education were closely intertwined in the sense that mothers who had high education married late and conversely, mothers who married late acquired relatively higher education. Jointly they explained family planning acceptance better than either of them alone. Without implying a strict causal sequence we can mention the conclusions reached by Bogue (1969). After analysing U.S. Census data and making international comparisons he concluded that :

"Throughout the world there seems to be a strong inverse correlation between the amount of educational attainment and the level of fertility (p.693)....
Although these results are very crude, they suggest that rising educational levels, increased school attendance, and elimination of early marriage are much more powerful in promoting fertility reduction than simple urbanization and rising levels of income. A major driving force behind fertility control appears to be education (p.675)".

With this introduction we should proceed to answer why high education of mother and her age at marriage leads to greater family planning acceptance. Earlier, while discussing mother's education we had mentioned Pareek and Rao's (1974)

review of 69 Indian studies which had explored relationship
between education and various aspects of fertility and family
planning. To provide a broader base to our answer, we had a
second look at the conclusions (pp.43-44) they had reached.
They suggested that in general, education leads to greater
exposure to mass media, which makes people more receptive to
new ideas and practices. As a result, educated people have
wider choice of contraceptive methods and more control in
determining their family size. This is similar to the model
from communication research suggested by Rogers (1973), which
we presented in the first chapter.

From our data, we have already concluded that mother's
higher age at marriage and her high education lead to greater
family planning acceptance (Gamma = .873). If we include
exposure to mass media as a third variable, we do have a chain
suggested by earlier researchers. Table XXIV has provided data
for exposure to mass media, which can be reanalysed and
included to complete the chain to answer the question as to
why age at marriage and education leads to F.P. acceptance.

Thus, our data suggest that mothers who married late,
remained in school for longer (or vice-versa). Of 77 mothers,
who had married late and had high education, 57 (74%) had
higher exposure to mass-media. But from 112 mothers, who had

married earlier and had low education, only 34 (30%) had
higher exposure to mass media.

When we add all of these three variables together, we
can construct two extreme groups. One group in which mothers
married late, had high education and were better exposed to
mass media. We had 57 such mothers of whom 84 per cent (48
cases) had high family planning acceptance. Second group had
mothers who married early, had low education and were less
exposed to mass media. We had 78 such mothers of whom only 19
per cent (15 cases) had high family planning acceptance. Gamma
coefficient for these two extreme groups and their relation
with F.P. acceptance with two extreme groups of education and
age at marriage we were able to get 58 per cent difference
(79-21) and a Gamma = .873. But when we add third variable,
i.e. exposure to mass media, and associate F.P. acceptance
with two extreme groups (i.e. High Education, high age at
marriage and high mass media exposure V/s low education,
low age at marriage, low mass media exposure); we are able to
get 65 per cent difference (84-19) and a Gamma = .915. So,
tentatively we conclude that the reason why education and age
at marriage showed high association with F.P. acceptance was
that mothers who married late, remained in school for longer
(or vice-versa). They had higher exposure to mass media. And
all of these resulted in greater F.P. acceptance. We said

tentative conclusion because we are aware of the limitations
of the study in terms of atypical population, possible errors
in measurement and use of non-parametric statistics.

4. On the basis of this study, what suggestions can be made
for social work research and practice ?

(A) With more time, resources and greater availability and
use of consultative services; implications of this study are
straight forward.First of all we need to test applicability of
relevant approaches, theories and conceptual models for social
work research and practice.

Social work profession completed four decades in India.
Still many people feel that we are gropping in dark. Some of
the remarks representative of these feelings were expressed
in second chapter. Subsequently we presented few models from
various social sciences and a limited one for present study.
Accepting earlier mentioned limitations of the study, we feel
confident that the data supported the model. In general, we
concluded that mother's status (her age at marriage and edu-
cation) in interaction with exposure to mass media (an indicator
of modernity) enables them to adopt changes (e.g. family
planning). Most important was that mother's status was relati-
vely more determining than father's status for adoption of
changes.

If more inclusive approaches can be tested through evaluative or action research we can advance our knowledge and practice. By more inclusive approach we mean one which will take into account wide variety of variables. For example, characteristics of desired changes; characteristics of change agents/agencies; content, channels and processes of communication; norms and values of the social system in which the changes are being introduced and the characteristics of target groups of clients. These blocks of variables are suggested by communication theories.

Similarly, systems approach has been found useful by many theoreticians, researchers and practitioners; in wide variety of situations. Let us clarify that the word 'system' is understood and used in different context. For example, we say personality system, hydraulic system, an electrical system, etc. All these systems have some common properties. They consist of relatively stable, interacting, interrelated, interdependent parts (structure) and carry on repeatitive and patterned activities to achieve a common goal. Viewed this way, systems approach enables us to see individuals, groups, communities, organizations etc. not in terms of static equilibrium but in terms of openness to exchange with the environment. It also helps us to map out numerous variables, the inter-connections among them; and to organize and

integrate a multitude of perspectives and methodological approaches that may be used in attempts to achieve change of various kinds. Implicit or explicit theoretical perspectives on systems approach and case studies with its applications in social work field situations are provided by Hearn (1968); Pincus and Minhan (1973); Goldstein (1973); Klenk and Ryan (1974); and Tripodi et al (1977). We need to test their applicability in Indian situations.

(B) In earlier paragraphs we suggested that we need to test inclusive and synthesized approaches, theories and models applicable in variety of social work situations. For this kind of testing we need precise, reliable and valid measurement. Low correlation between modernity and family planning acceptance in the present study was partly attributed to possible measurement error. Not only in this study but almost in any discussion on social work practice situations, one comes across terms like psycho-social functioning, development, quality of life, delinquency prevention, environmental modification, ego support, professional relationship, psycho--social adjustment etc. In India, very little has been done to operationalize these or any other relevant concepts and achieve precision, reliability and validity.

Precision can be viewed from existing measurements in

social work. Most of our measurements are in the form of
nominal, none/some scale or at the most ordinal scale. It is
not sufficient to say accepting/rejecting, delinquent/non-
delinquent, adequate/inadequate functioning etc. We should be
able to describe all the possible multidimentionality of these
concepts, specify the degree of occurance and their inter-
relationships in the form of interval scale. This will enable
us to measure and increase reliability and validity of these
concepts. This suggestion is intended for greater communica-
bility and increased possibilities for discovering and esta-
blishing relationships among phenomena which we wish to
predict and control.