



SIMPLE TEACHING AID
for
MOTHER & CHILD CARE

Director of Rural Health Services
And Training Programmes

A MOTT PUBLICATION

Moving Closer to the Rural Poor

Shared experiences of the Mobile Orientation and Training Team

MOVING CLOSER TO THE RURAL POOR is an interesting report on the efforts of MOIT (Mobile Orientation and Training Team) of the Indian Social Institute to assist voluntary organisations in adopting a more people-centred approach in rural development. It presents a picture of MOIT's special way of operation.

The contents, divided into *three* parts, reflect the role of each member of the team.

The *first* part gives information on MOIT : its composition, objectives, methods, types of activities. Some significant insights gained by the team through intensive contact with villagers are also included in this part.

The *second* part talks about the experiences in searching for more appropriate ways of meeting the needs of the rural poor, by the team's agriculture and communications expert.

The *third* part focuses on community health : the ways of training illiterate women as basic health workers and of setting up an effective health care system in the rural areas.

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INTRODUCTION

This little booklet contains precious teaching material for Health Education. It is precious because the ideas expressed through the pictures have originated in the minds of illiterate village women. Women, whose creativity has been challenged while training to become Basic Health Workers.

Sr. Sara is the author of this booklet. She first got an artist to draw the pictures that represent things commonly seen and used in the village. These pictures she utilised in training hundreds of Village Health Workers. The text that accompanies each visual aid has been composed by her, and forms part of what she has learnt from the trainees.

Though in most cases destitute, and illiterate, the rural poor have a highly developed capacity to be attuned to nature. They have, as Paulo Freire says, 'a language rich in images of nature'. They express the joy and sorrow, the beauty and the ugliness of nature in their stories and in their songs. On the basis of this being in constant touch with the world of plants, trees, and animals, their creative imagination has vast potential for stimulation through the use of appropriate methods of Adult Education.

Sr. Sara possesses this art in an exceptional way. She comes from a family in which closeness to nature has always been a way of life. This has enabled her to help un-educated village women discover in nature, challenges in solving problems related to their daily lives.

This booklet basically expresses a way of learning. It leads un-educated people from what they commonly see and know, to what they do not know. In other words, it is a process of going from the known to the un-known. For example, from the way birds build their nests on trees in the village, a lesson is learnt regarding how an expectant mother should prepare for the arrival of her baby. New ways of dealing with daily problems of the people are found from an analysis of the known, and in its application to particular situations. In this process, new initiatives are taken, and positive attitudes are acquired.

Apart from its immediate practical usefulness for Health Education, this booklet can foster greatly a strong faith in poor people. For many reasons, their human potentialities have remained dormant, like seeds that never get in touch with the soil, sun, and water. So the rural poor remain like blossoms in the dust. The creative capacities of these people need to be challenged, and we hope this booklet helps in making a small beginning in that direction. The processes by which they acquire insights into deeper causes of poverty and disease will be the subject of another MOTT booklet.

Sr. Sara welcomes any comments from the readers of this booklet. She is a Medical Mission Sister, and is one of the four team members of the Mobile Orientation & Training Team of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

Henry Volken,
MOTT, Nagpur.

MOTT is presently based at 7, Sial Layout, Sitaram Das Road, Chhaoni, Nagpur-440 013. For more information on their activities, we suggest you read the booklet entitled, "Moving Closer To The Rural Poor".

Picture No. I.



What do you see in this picture ? ** Yes, it is a picture of a bird and a tree. And there are four birds' nests hanging from this tree. Who builds the nest ? ** Yes, the bird builds the nest. But why does it build the nest ? ** That's right. The bird builds the nest to protect its young ones from the sun and the rain, and to keep them safe and comfortable. When does the bird build the nest ? ** Yes, you are correct. The bird builds the nest much in advance. It does not wait for the last minute. It builds the nest much in advance so that when the time comes for her to lay the eggs, she has a place ready. If the bird is so concerned as to prepare a place much in advance for her young ones, how much more concerned should a mother be ? ** (Now discuss how a mother should prepare for the arrival of her baby. What are the necessary things that a baby requires ? How do you prepare the place where the baby is born, etc).

*** Let the participants answer.*

Normally, preparation for child-birth is not done because of certain beliefs and customs that people believe in. Our efforts should be directed to showing the people that these beliefs and practises of theirs are harmful to the birth of the child. Through this comparative study, we must convince them of the need to keep the baby warm and comfortable, in a clean environment, and properly cared for by the mother.

For the birth of the baby, all that is required are a few pieces of old but clean clothes to wrap the baby, and a clean place for the baby to have a peaceful sleep.

End the discussion by asking the participants for answers to this question. If a bird is so concerned about its young ones, do you think a mother should be equally concerned about the arrival of her baby? How should the mother prepare for the arrival of her baby? ** What should she eat, and what exercise should she do? ** What are the things that she should keep ready so that when the baby comes, it is assured of warmth and good care?

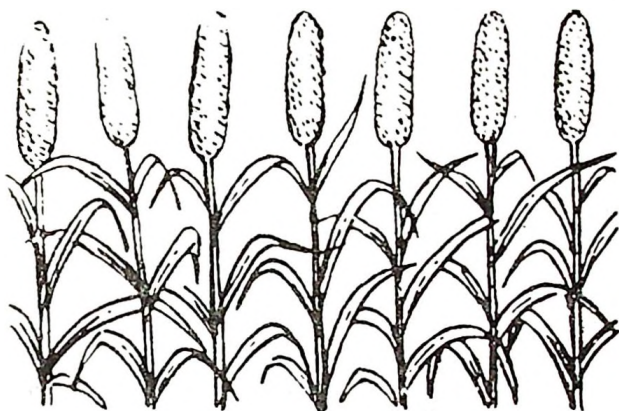
Now what do you see? ** A woman. Yes, that is a woman. But what kind of a woman? ** That's right. A pregnant woman. What do you mean by saying that she is pregnant? ** Yes, she has a baby in her womb, and soon the baby will be born.

You have just seen how the bird has prepared a nest for her young ones. She prepares the nest in advance to keep her young ones safe and comfortable. Is the mother in this picture as concerned as the bird? ** If they say she is not so concerned, ask them what are the things the mother can do to become more concerned.

*** Let the participants answer.*

Picture No. 2 a.



Picture No. 2 b.

Look at these two comparative pictures. What do you see at the top? ** Yes, there are two jowar crops. And what do you see at the bottom? ** Correct. There are two pregnant women. Now, do you notice any difference between both the sets of crops? ** Yes, one set of crops is healthy, while the other is not. Can any one of you tell us why this is so? ** Yes, that is right. One set of

Let the participants answer.

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jowar crops has got timely care, ie, sufficient manure (nutrition), water, and sunshine, timely weeding, action against pests and diseases, and other necessary care. But the second set of crops was neglected. No manure, very little or no water, it is weakened by disease and attacked by pests. The crop has withered and died. The healthy plant gives healthy fruit. The sickly plant bears sickly fruit.

Now look at the picture of the two pregnant women. What do you see ?** Yes. One woman looks healthy and fresh, while the other looks tired and pale. There are wrinkles on her face. Why do both these women look different ?** Yes, that is correct. The healthy one has got timely care, nutritious food, fresh air, good drinking water, protection against disease, love, peace of mind, and a clean environment. The un-healthy one does not have all these requirements. Don't you think that the unhealthy mother should also be taken care of ?** If they say 'Yes', ask them what are the things that should be provided to the unhealthy mother in order to restore her back to health. Draw a strong comparison between the plants that they care for so well. Ask them if their mothers are not as valuable as the plants so as to be given equal if not better care and attention.

**** Let the participants answer.**

Picture No. 3.

Now what do you see ? ** All right, That is a picture of a small plant that is fenced in. But why is it fenced in ? ** That's correct. It is fenced in to protect it from destructive animals. Now what do you see? ** Correct. A mother carrying her baby, and a doctor is giving the baby an injection on his left leg. Why is the child being given an injection ? ** The injection is being given to protect the child from certain diseases that can prove fatal. Just as the fence protects the tender plant from destructive animals, so the injection (immunization) protects the child from early death and deadly diseases.

**** Let the participants answer.**



What do you see in this picture ? ** That's right. A set of healthy plants on one side, and another set of withered ones on the other side. And what is below this ? ** Sickly and malnourished children again on one side, and healthy children on the other side. What do these two pictures, one of the plants and the other of the children mean to you? ** (Help them to come to the point by asking simple questions). What does a little plant need to grow? ** Yes, it needs nutrition, manure, water, sunshine, tender care, support, preventative care against diseases, etc. Only then will it grow as a healthy plant. Whereas the plant that is uncared for, no manure, no water, no sunshine, etc. has withered and dried.

Now that you have seen what a young plant needs, can you tell us what a baby needs? ** Yes, you are right. A baby needs nutritious food, according to its needs, water, love, sunshine, tender care, preventative care against diseases, etc, to grow and develop his mind, body and intellect. This should be introduced gradually at the early stages of a child's life, just as we give the small plant a little dose of water and manure. All of you know how to take care of a tender plant. Can any of you tell me how we must take care of a baby? ** (The teacher then explains the gradual introduction of solid food).

*** Let the participants answer.*

Picture No 5 a**Picture No. 5 b.**

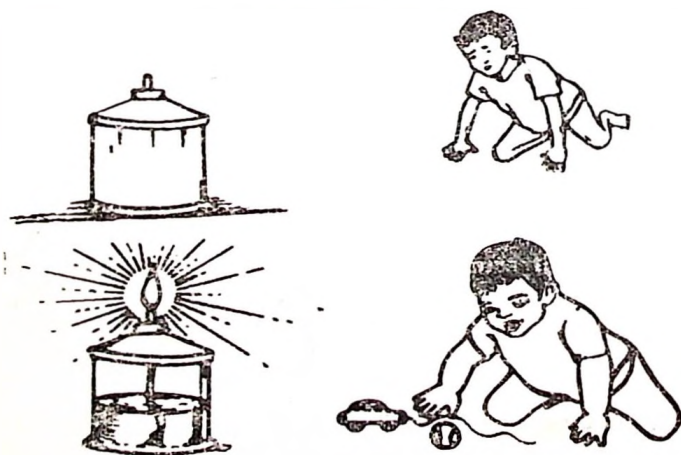
What do you see here? ** A picture of a small hut. The wind and the rain have battered and broken down the hut. The hut is built of poor quality material. It is very weak. Now look at the other picture. What do you see? ** Another small house.

*** Let the participants answer.*

Same shape and same size. But it is strongly built. Even in the face of rains and strong winds it does not break down.

Now here's another picture. Children. Everyone likes children. But no mother likes to have a sickly child. Do any of you like to have sickly children? ** Look at this child. So bony. Hardly any life left in him. He is ready to collapse at any moment. Just as the rain and the wind can destroy the house that is built of poor quality material, so too can disease destroy the child that is not properly cared for. When the human body is not built strongly, it falls victim to a number of diseases. It is not strong enough to resist them. But a healthy child has a lot of resistance. It is like the house made of good quality material. Nothing can break it down. Would you like to have sickly children or healthy children? ** So all of you want healthy children. That's very good. But what do you have to do to keep your children healthy? ** (The teacher starts the discussion over again and emphasises each aspect).

Picture No. 6



What do you see in these two pictures? ** Yes, you see two lamps and two children. One lamp gives out a bright light.

** Let the participants answer.

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This lamp has plenty of oil, and one end of the wick touches the oil level. The oil stimulates the wick, and thus it burns well. The other lamp has gone out. Why has it gone out? ** Yes, that's correct. There is no oil to stimulate the wick, and hence there is no light. When will the lamp burn? ** Of course, when there is sufficient oil, and when one end of the wick touches the level of the oil. What happens when a lamp burns? ** That's right. It gives plenty of light all around. A lamp is useless if it does not give light.

Now look at these two children. What difference do you notice among them? ** Correct. One child is very happy and is playing freely, while the other looks un-happy and in-active. What is the happy child playing with? ** You are right. It is playing with a toy car. What does a child need for his total development? ** A child needs food for his physical growth and development. He also needs something to stimulate his intellectual growth and to develop his creative talent. For this, a child needs play material. Just as the oil stimulates the wick to burn, play material stimulates the brain and the intellectual capacity of a child. This will make the child bright and happy like the burning lamp.

Look at the other child. Why does he look dull, in-active, and un-happy? ** That's right. He has no means to stimulate his intellect. He has nothing to keep him occupied. He is just like the dead lamp you have now seen. No oil, no flame, no light. Do you want your child to be like the dead lamp? ** Surely nobody wants a child to be like a dead lamp. What must you do to make your child bright and active? ** Yes. He not only needs food, but a congenial environment and play material in order to stimulate his physical and mental growth. This will keep him bright and happy.

*** Let the participants answer.*

Picture No. 7



Here is another picture. What do you see in it? ** The cow is feeding its calf. What does the calf require in the early part of its life? ** Yes. It requires its mother's milk. The cow feeds the calf from the time it is born until it is big enough to eat solid food like grass and other food. Until it reaches such a stage, the cow nourishes the calf with its own milk. It is the right food at the right time.

Look at this picture of a mother feeding her child. In that tender age, milk of the mother is the right food at the right time. Bottle feed can be substituted for breast feed, but it is not so nourishing and easily available, clean, and cheap. And above all, breast feeding is preferred to bottle feeding because the child develops a close relationship with its mother. Do you think a new born baby should be breast fed or bottle fed? ** When should the baby be given solid food? ** (Explain the aspect of early introduction of solid food).

*** Let the participants answer.*