

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental purpose of management is to bring about change in an orderly manner. Change is the fact of life, it may be fast or slow. The individual and the family manage their personal affairs within a constantly changing world. The change may be the result of freely chosen goals or of adjustments to forces beyond the control of the individual or family, (Gross, et, al, 1973). For example, a child born with some physical handicap or affected by it sometime during the life.

"How we respond to change depends on the situation in which we find ourselves at the moment of change", state Deacon and Firebaugh (1975). The way we respond also, depends on the depth of our insight into the problems and challenges resulting from change. It further depends on our resourcefulness in discovering ways to cope with the changing circumstances.

Families are very resilient in their responses to changes in the environment. They may respond in several ways. The three common ways outlines by Deacon and Firebaugh (1975) are:

- 1) By adjusting temporarily to external forces.
- 2) By moving to more congenial surroundings.
- 3) By reorganizing the family system to cope with an unexpected change in the environment.

The last of the ways have to be adopted by the family when it is faced with a permanent change in the environment or its members, for example : when one of the family members is permanently handicapped or disabled. Having a disabled person in the family needs a total reorganization of the family managerial system. The family has to adjust its financial resources, time and activity patterns and general resource allocations. The family also needs to reconsider its role definitions, decision making patterns and group relation. The family thus faces problems which need careful allocation of resources and development of specific goals to make the disabled family member self-reliant and self-sufficient.

The attitudes of the family members affect the goals families set for rehabilitation of the disabled family member, problem faced by them and adjustments made by them in order to meet the changing situations. The adjustments have to be made by the disabled persons themselves but the extent to which they succeed is very much dependent upon the family in which they live.

Management, therefore, becomes the major means of achieving the family goals. Home managers face the challenge of using their resources in order to satisfy the purposes they consider important. The need to set priority among the goals becomes more important. For instance, a family may decide to channelize major portion of its resources for the benefit of only one person; an especially talented or an especially handicapped member or a member with a particularly significant role such as the breadwinner. This may result either in partial realization of goals

for some members of the family or an attempt on the part of the family to increase the total resources to achieve the set goals.

One of the important factors influencing resource management is the health of the family members. Health is defined by United Nation's World Health Organization as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Disability on the other hand is a condition of impairment, physical or mental, having an objective aspect that can usually be described by a physician as limitation of physical or mental function whether locomotor, sensory or affecting special organs.

A physical disability becomes a handicap only when it is seen as a significant barrier to the accomplishment of particular goals. This means that in an individual case a physical disability may not be a handicap because a physically disabled person is also a physically able person. There are things he can do as well as things he cannot do. Therefore he is not a "physically disabled person" but a person with a physical disability, (Wright, 1960). A handicap is the cumulative result of the obstacles which disability imposes on the individual and his maximum functional level (1960). The determination of standards or functional levels or what the person needs and is expected to do, itself partly depends upon the cultural setting in which the person finds himself. The handicap has thus to be evaluated in terms of demands of the situation in which the person finds himself and the extent to which he is helped by the family and society to be an independent person.

The Impact of Disability on Individual, Family and Society

Human life is a continuous process of adjustments and readjustments. Although the adjustments have to be made by the disabled persons themselves but the extent to which they succeed in achieving proper adjustments is very much dependent upon the family in which they live and the attitude of the society in which they breathe. Therefore the effects of disability are seldom, if ever, confined to physical condition alone. In majority of cases they extend far beyond it, embracing the psychological, educational, social and vocational fields. The effects of disability leave their mark on family's management of resources.

Various problems faced by the disabled and the family, in the society, can be classified as physical, psychological, social, educational, employment, marriage, financial and management of household work.

The loss of movement and dependability in daily routine activities constitute major problems in the physical aspect. The extent of this problem can be reduced if treated properly and in time. The extent to which family and society face problems in this respect depends upon how far they are able to help the individual in developing his residual resources.

The physical disability causes among other things, some sort of psychological disturbances which may vary from slight inferiority complex to over aggression. These may be due to disability itself, or indirectly the result of social attitudes. The family of the disabled person also go through similar

psychological problems, especially the parents of the disabled child. Development of positive attitude towards disability helps a lot in this respect. Need of counselling and guidance to such parents is self-evident and emphasizes the role of social welfare agencies.

Disability affects both the individual's social standing and his family happiness. In the society the disabled person is taken as cheap labour. He is discharged when not needed and is underpaid in private jobs. The only course open to him is the self-employment. In the family situation he or she is at times sandwiched between two extremes; over protection to complete negligence. The development of positive attitude of the family and society towards disability is essential for his social rehabilitation.

The negative attitudes, actions and reactions of the parents, the family members, the peer groups, the school and the community at large, play an important role in making the disability more of a handicap and comes in the way of making adjustments by the disabled person.

People with any form of disability are like any other normal person, so far as their basic needs are concerned. Besides these needs, they have some special needs which depend not only on the nature of defects and their severity, but also on his own attitude and the attitude his family and his peers take towards the disability. When they are treated differently from normal, their attitude may turn to be negative. On the other hand careful handling, normal and equal treatment may lead to the

development of positive attitude by the disabled people and thereby reducing adjustment problems to the physical condition only.

Most of the children cannot benefit from existing educational facilities because of family's limited resources. They need special tools, and techniques for instruction. The need for special schools or special facilities in normal schools are essential features of their educational needs.

It is hard for a disabled person to secure a job unless some special provision is made for him. He suffers from unhelpful attitude of potential employers, co-workers and community in general. Vocational rehabilitation is the goal of the whole process of restoration.

Finding a suitable marriage partner poses the greatest problem. Earlier the possibility of a disabled person being married was not very high. The change in attitude of the people, however, will reduce the problem to a certain degree, in case of those who are employed or engaged in self-employment.

Families who have disabled person often experience a strain on financial resources. The disabled persons themselves feel that they are a financial burden on the family. The family has to cut their expenditures on essential and luxury items in order to make proper provisions for the disabled family member. The benefits and facilities provided by the community can ease the burden of the family to a very great extent.

Management in families with disabled member differs from that of normal households. The effect of disability on the

management of household is seen in the manner in which the input to the managerial system namely, demands, resources and the goals the family sets for the rehabilitation vary. If there are problems in agreement of the family members on special goals set for rehabilitation of disabled family member and allocation of resources especially for the benefit of one person, the situation becomes more difficult to manage.

When the homemaker herself is disabled, the problems are of different nature. The work she can do is limited, the standards she can achieve are restricted, the help she needs may be more and the time she spends on task may be more.

There is no shortage of literature and comment about the problems that the disabled person and the family face. It is most discouraging to note that the efforts so far made centre around the study of psycho-social problems faced by the disabled persons; his education; vocational training; rehabilitation and a study of their economic conditions. Very little if anything is being said about the families who meet the crisis situation with resourcefulness and insight.

Justification of the Study

To manage well one does not have to know management concepts and processes on a formalized level, said Deacon and Firebaugh (1975). They, however, emphasize that, knowledge about the concepts and principles makes it possible for us to be able and willing to analyze our own management. Secondly, recognize and understand the ways in which others manage and lastly, help others with their management problems. The main purpose of the

present study was also on the similar lines, that is, to understand and recognize the ways in which the homemakers with a disabled member in the family manage their resources. It was also planned with the view of helping these families in solving their problems and improving their management.

The need for making families aware of the key-role they have to play in coping up with the problems of the family and making adjustments in their resources and goals, becomes immediate concern of educators in the field of home management. The family, the school and the community can provide proper situations and facilities to the disabled people if they know their problems and how to cope with them in similar situations. The findings can bring to the attention of the people who are empowered to plan for the future of the disabled population; the needs of the families with disabled family member. The results can also be used to stimulate the creation of new welfare services and the extension of those which already exist.

At no time in the history of human race there has been so much of national and international interest in finding solutions to the problems of the disabled. The year 1981 was declared by United Nations as the International Year for the Disabled Person (IYDP). The research activities and the welfare programmes had gained impetus during this year. The present study is humble contribution of the investigator towards the international problem.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were :

- 1) To identify the management problems faced and practices followed by the homemakers with the disabled family member.
- 2) To determine the factors which influence the management problems and practices of the homemakers with disabled family member.
- 3) To analyze the attitudes of homemakers towards disability.
- 4) To study the interrelationship among extent of problems faced by the homemakers, adjustments made by them and the attitude of the homemaker.
- 5) To evolve suggestions :
 - a) for homemakers to cope up with the problems they face.
 - b) for social welfare agencies to improve their services.

Basic Assumptions

- 1) The families with disabled person in the family do face psychological and managerial problems although the extent to which they face such problems may vary with the circumstances.
- 2) All families follow certain practices to meet the crisis created by the presence of disabled person in the family.

Delimitations of the Study

- 1) The study was limited to five categories of disabled persons.
 - a) Orthopaedically handicapped.
 - b) Blind.
 - c) Deaf-mute.
 - d) Mentally retarded.
 - e) Cerebral palsy.
- 2) The study was limited to case-studies of 25 families; five families in each of the above mentioned groups.
- 3) The study was limited to the families of selected group of disabled persons residing in the city of Vadodara (Baroda).