

# A BIZARRE MEDLEY OF CARROTS

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*In the last two years the government in achieving its aims of population control has proposed a number of incentives and disincentives. The author has compiled reports from newspapers in Hyderabad, which tell eloquent story about the government's priorities with regard to the family planning programme.*

The following collection of news items over the period 1982-84 presents a picture of the Establishment's preoccupation over incentives and disincentives to achieve population control. They are arranged in a roughly chronological order and a number of the items happen to be from Andhra Pradesh because they were reported in newspapers in Hyderabad where I live. If the readers were to go through newspapers published from other cities the picture from other states would be much the same. I've left out a large number of items which tend to be repetitive and which are only too familiar today to the average newspaper reader in this country i.e., announcement of a 'camp' with date and venue, total number of operations proposed to be performed and quantum of incentive money offered. I've included a few oddities which are not strictly about incentives but which add further piquancy to the total mosaic. I refrain from making any comment as the collage speaks eloquently for itself.

## 1982

☉ The Bihar cabinet sub-committee on family welfare announces 33 cash prizes of Rs. 10,000 each for gram panchayats achieving the "highest target" of sterilisations in the current year. As second and third prizes 66 cash awards would be given to gram panchayats at the rate of Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 3,000 each respectively.

☉ Extract from a panel discussion on Calcutta Doordarshan's family welfare programme. One doctor comments on the uneven performance of different states in curbing the birth rate and another responds: "I suggest, but you may not like the idea, that birth control should be made compulsory by law."

☉ A new scheme is introduced on an experimental basis by the union ministry of health to enlist the help of private practitioners to achieve tubectomy targets. A private practitioner will be entitled to receive Rs. 50 for each case of tubectomy out of the admissible compensation amount of Rs. 170 to the acceptor, irrespective of whether or not the doctor charges his own fee from the acceptor.

March 1985

☉ Industrialists led by J.R.D. Tata announce a contribution of Rs. 10 lakhs to the Family Planning Foundation of India and Rs. 5 lakhs every year hence forth. Mr. Tata tells newsmen that the allocation of Rs. 1,000 crores for FP in the Sixth plan is barely one per cent of the total outlay and is inadequate to check population growth.

☉ Mr. Sat Pal Mittal, MP and chairman of the Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, suggests incentives for FP acceptors like: cash awards, additional bonus, allotment of houses, plots, commercial shops or booths, rebate in income-tax and exemptions from import duty. Other suggestions: three increments for an employee opting for a terminal method after one child and two increments for an employee opting for terminal method after two children. However, an employee having a third child should have his increment deferred by six months, and by one year for any subsequent birth.

☉ Package of disincentives suggested to the health ministry by the Asian Parliamentary Forum for families with more than two children: higher rate of interest on loans, low priority in housing, higher rate of income tax, leave travel expenses only for two children; free medical treatment or reimbursement for only two children, no paid maternity leave for women after two children, public officials who exceed the limit of two children during their tenure of office be made to resign from office.

## 1983

☉ Union government announces that green cards will be issued to individual acceptors of terminal methods after two children. Such green card holders will be accorded recognition, priority attention and preferential treatment.

☉ During 1982-83, East Godavari district performed 27,937 sterilisations against the target of 27,900 thus giving 100.13% achievement for the district.

☉ At special sterilisation camps organised in three AP towns, State Bank of India provided incentive

money at the rate of Rs. 115 per woman and Rs. 95 per man in addition to gifts for motivators.

⊗ A laparoscopic 'mela' took place in Kumbakonam, the city of festivals in June 1983 when as many as 1,225 women were operated upon. The district collector who organised the camp said it was a world record for a single day. So great was the response that the camp was extended for a second day. The highlight is described as the fact that as many as 263 women were below 25.

⊗ Maharashtra having won a Rs. 2.5 crore award for outstanding FP performance in 1982-83, announces an ambitious target of 687,000 sterilisations in 1983-84, though the target fixed for this state by the centre is only 601,000 sterilisations.

⊗ The Gujarat government announces a 20-day foreign trip for district panchayat officers and employees with best performance in family welfare programme. The new scheme is introduced to maintain 'round-the-year' tempo of the programme. District officials with best performance would be sent on study tours to foreign countries at state government expense while the staff of taluka and village panchayats would be sent on a 20-day tour within the country.

⊗ The Kerala government offers incentives of a would tour at government expense to the collector of the district which registers the maximum number of FP operations in a two-month campaign. During the programme incentives to acceptors would be enhanced from Rs. 145 to Rs 170 for women. Men undergoing vasectomy would get Rs. 155 while promoters would receive Rs. 20 for each vasectomy case and Rs. 15 for each tubectomy against the earlier Rs.10. The state health minister expresses the hope that Kerala would win the Rs 2.5 crore cash award given every year by the Union government to that state which performs the maximum number of sterilisations.

⊗ The Delhi Administration announces 'attractive' prizes like wrist watches and cash awards for motivators and acceptors as part of a family welfare programme.

⊗ After the announcement of an enhanced incentive of Rs. 200 for acceptors of sterilisation, there was an unprecedented turn-out at FP camps in Madras --posing problems for the organisers who ran out of funds.

⊗ A health ministry working group on incentives and disincentives suggests that any violation of the

small family norm should disqualify a person from standing for an election. Such violation should also disqualify a person from appointment to university senates, directorship of a bank, vice-chancellorship and gubernatorial posts.

⊗ An expert group appointed by the Family planning Foundation of India, chaired by Justice G. D. Khosla, reiterates the disincentives recommended earlier by bodies like the Asian Parliamentary Forum and other working groups (listed in the earlier news items). In addition the Khosla committee suggests low priority for admission into educational institutions for third and subsequent children.

⊗ A DAVP ad issued by the Delhi Administration announces special attractions by lucky draw during a family welfare campaign: **Male sterilisation**: (apart from normal incentives): Rajdoot motorcycle, TV, Phillips transistor radio, and HMT watches. **Copper T** (apart from normal incentives): Colour TV, black and white TV, pressure cookers and HMT ladies watches. The ad urges readers to 'avail opportunity' and says: "Do not wait for tomorrow".

#### 1984

⊗ TISCO of Jamshedpur wins the 1983 award from FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) for promotion of FP among workers. TISCO's FP programme achieved 7,249 sterilisations during 1982-83.

⊗ Health ministry's advice to state governments on wooing the public to take to sterilisation: issue green cards entitling acceptors to jump the queue for certain facilities and to provide five state lottery tickets of the next draw to acceptors.

⊗ The Andhra Pradesh state government gears itself to achieve the FP target for 1984-85 through a larger number of camps and more incentive schemes. Acceptors' awards to carry prizes of Rs. 400, 200 and 100 through a lottery system in sterilisation camps where over 100 operations are conducted.

⊗ A DAVP ad for a special FP drive in Delhi announces a target of 7,000 sterilisations and 10,000 IUD insertions. To achieve this an 'additional' amount of Rs. 25 and Rs. 5 respectively would be given to the motivator for each case of sterilisation and IUD.

⊗ The 'Sadhana Samiti' in collaboration with the AP government organises a cartoon competition with cash prizes on the theme of family welfare, the

topics being: small family, spacing, sterilisation, MTP, late marriage and maternal and child services.

☉ The Kerala government announces a lottery exclusively for sterilisation acceptors. Men and women undergoing the operation would receive free lottery tickets and there would be a draw once every three months.

☉ The Population Advisory Council has before it a proposal by which a public servant will be sacked if a child is born to him besides the two or more existing children after one year from the prescribed date. Other proposals: Security bond of Rs. one lakh maturing after 20 years for those undergoing sterilisation after one or two daughters; a bond of Rs. 60,000 for those undergoing sterilisation after one son and one daughter or after one or two sons; income tax rebate for persons not having more than two children; to promote late marriage employers should pay Rs. 25 per month to unmarried working girls over 20 years with a matching contribution by the government for three years. The amount will be credited to their account and will be available after three years. To postpone the birth of the first and second child a small monthly allowance may be paid to newly married employees.

☉ The AP health minister, Rammuni Reddy, calls for a hike in incentives for FP acceptors, citing the example of Maharashtra where such a hike enabled that state to bag the cash award of Rs. 2.5 crores. He feels that if the state fixes a target of five lakh sterilisations, the extra expenditure involved would be offset by the bagging of the national cash award.

☉ The Madhya Pradesh government introduces a 'green card' system for those undergoing sterilisation after two children: each green card holder will get preference in employment, health cover and financial assistance under various schemes; two years relaxation in age for employment and 5% extra marks in interviews; also free medicine and medical care in government hospitals; children need not pay fees in professional courses. In rural areas, landless card holders will get priority in land allotment and house plots, as well as 20 bamboos and ten wooden poles free of cost from the nearest forest depot, licences to open retail shops for fuel and kerosene, priority in allotment of cement, priority in getting loans for milk cattle, grants for setting up wells, pumps and bio-gas plants.

☉ The *Indian Express* reports a 'massive fraud' and "statistical acrobatics" in Copper T figures by the Maharashtra government in its efforts to ensure that it again wins the Rs. 2.5 crore annual cash prize awarded by the Union government.

March 1985

☉ The Rotary Club announces a two-day 'mini' camp at Nellore in AP with a target of 300 sterilisations. An incentive of Rs. 145 for women and Rs. 125 for men will be given, plus free food to attendants and milk to children accompanying the parents.

☉ The Punjab health secretary announces a plan to introduce a raffle scheme to attract acceptors of sterilisation. Apart from prize Rs. 1,000 each at monthly draws, a quarterly state-level draw would have a first prize of Rs. one lakh. The scheme would not be a burden on the exchequer as the funds would be drawn from the prize money earlier won by the state from the centre for its FP performance. Approval from the centre is awaited.

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