

ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE, ICDDR,B.

Dr. Ruth Simmons Co-Principal Investigator

Principal Investigator Dr. Michael Koenig Trainee Investigator (if any) Rezina Mita

Application No. 86-037P

Supporting Agency (if Non-ICDDR,B) 22

Title of Study: Women's Status and Family Planning in Matlab.: A

Project status:
() New Study
() Continuation with change
() No change (do not fill out rest of form)

Qualitative Study.

Circle the appropriate answer to each of the following (If Not Applicable write NA).

- 1. Source of Population:
 - (a) Ill subjects: Yes No
 - (b) Non-ill subjects: Yes No
 - (c) Minors or persons under guardianship: Yes No

- 5. Will signed consent form be required:
 - (a) From subjects: Yes No
 - (b) From parent or guardian (if subjects are minors): Yes No

- 2. Does the study involve:
 - (a) Physical risks to the subjects: Yes No
 - (b) Social Risks: Yes No
 - (c) Psychological risks to subjects: Yes No
 - (d) Discomfort to subjects: Yes No
 - (e) Invasion of privacy: Yes No
 - (f) Disclosure of information damaging to subject or others: Yes No

- 6. Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects: Yes No
- 7. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - Umbrella proposal - Initially submit an overview (all other requirements will be submitted with individual studies). Protocol (Required)
 - Abstract Summary (Required)
 - Statement given or read to subjects on nature of study, risks, types of questions to be asked, and right to refuse to participate or withdraw (Required)
 - Informed consent form for subjects
 - Informed consent form for parent or guardian
 - Procedure for maintaining confidentiality
 - Questionnaire or interview schedule *

- 3. Does the study involve:
 - (a) Use of records, (hospital, medical, death, birth or other): Yes No
 - (b) Use of fetal tissue or abortus: Yes No
 - (c) Use of organs or body fluids: Yes No

- 4. Are subjects clearly informed about:
 - (a) Nature and purposes of study: Yes No
 - (b) Procedures to be followed including alternatives used: Yes No
 - (c) Physical risks: Yes No NA
 - (d) Sensitive questions: Yes No NA
 - (e) Benefits to be derived: Yes No NA
 - (f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from study: Yes No
 - (g) Confidential handling of data: Yes No
 - (h) Compensation &/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved in any particular procedure: Yes No NA

- * If the final instrument is not completed prior to review, the following information should be included in the abstract summary:
 - 1. A description of the areas to be covered in the questionnaire or interview which could be considered either sensitive or which would constitute an invasion of privacy.
 - 2. Examples of the type of specific questions to be asked in the sensitive areas.
 - 3. An indication as to when the questionnaire will be presented to the Cttee. for review.

I agree to obtain approval of the Ethical Review Committee for any changes involving the rights and welfare of subjects before making such change.

Ruth Simmons Michael A. Koenig Rezina Mita
Principal Investigator Trainee Investigator

86-037P
20/11/86

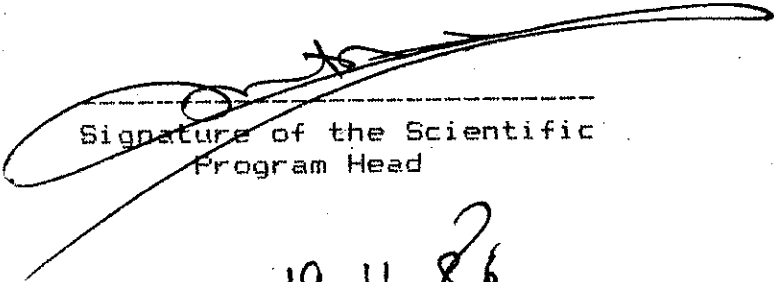
ABSTRACT SUMMARY FOR ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. Take from Page 2 - Abstract Summary
2. Focus group interviews will be conducted with -
 - (i) CHWs
 - (ii) Husbands of CHWs
 - (iii) Community leaders
 - (iv) Young married women who prior to marriage lived in the treatment area
 - (v) Middle-aged and elderly women of reproductive age
3. Observations will be conducted of routine CHW household visits in the treatment area.
4. Focus group discussions and observations will be carried out treatment area villages. A total of 36 Focus group sessions will be held.
5. Focus group discussions will center on the following major themes:
 - (i) Changes in the CHW's domestic authority.
 - (ii) The CHW's role as community resource.
 - (iii) The CHW's community prestige.
 - (iv) The CHW's role in facilitating innovation in reproductive behavior.
 - (v) Perceived consequences of family size limitation or spacing for women.
6. Focus group interviews will be tape recorded.
7. Data collected will be treated anonymously.

SECTION I: RESEARCH PROTOCOL (PILOT)

- (1) WOMEN'S STATUS AND FAMILY PLANNING IN MATLAB: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
- (2) PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: DR. RUTH SIMMONS
DR. MICHAEL A. KOENIG
- (3) STARTING DATE: DECEMBER 1, 1986
- (4) COMPLETION DATE: MAY 30, 1987
- (5) TOTAL DIRECT COST: See Section III, p. 13
- (6) SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM HEAD: DR. BADRUD DUZA

This protocol has been approved by the Population Science and Extension Division Working Group.



Signature of the Scientific
Program Head

Date: _____

19.11.86

I(7) Abstract Summary

The low status of women in Bangladesh has been widely documented, in fact it has been argued that women's dependency on men in Bangladesh is greater than that of women in patriarchal societies of other third world nations. The literature on women's status and development has looked towards socio-economic or institutional change as a precondition for transforming women's lives. Generally, service programs are not considered to be part of the institutional structure of society that can produce such change. Departing from this conventional wisdom, the proposed pilot study hypothesizes that the Matlab Project has had a significant effect on women's status. It is hypothesized that the project has improved gender inequality through two mechanisms: 1) the opportunity for meaningful labor force participation and development of new community norms for women's roles, and 2) encouragement of innovation in reproductive decision-making. The study uses a qualitative approach, using focus group discussions with CHWs, CHW-husbands, community leaders, and community women.

SECTION III: RESEARCH PLAN

(1) INTRODUCTION

a/b. Background and Objective

The Matlab MCH and family planning project has accomplished what many social demographers have argued to be impossible: reproductive change in a traditional society which has not experienced major socio-economic improvements. Matlab may not only represent a puzzle for social demography, but prove a similar surprise in the study of women's status, a field which looks towards socio-economic or institutional change as precondition for transforming women's lives. In either case service programs are not considered part of the institutional or structural nexus of society. They are not viewed as having the capacity to induce social change.

The pilot study suggested here takes a different point of view. We examine the hypothesis that the Matlab Project has had an effect not only on reproductive change, but on women's status as well. This hypothesis is to be investigated through a qualitative approach, relying predominantly on focus group interviews with CHWs, their husbands, community leaders, and clients.

c. Rationale

In the most general sense the term women's status refers to gender inequality, defined as unequal control over material and nonmaterial resources such as power, authority, prestige, knowledge, wealth or skills. A distinction is made between control over and access to resources. Access to resources, without control, does not necessarily imply high status.

In Bangladesh women receive unequal consideration and have unequal power in decisions of who gets what, when and how. Women's social status is directly tied to the institution of Purdah, a social system in which men exercise power and control over resources and women derive their influence and status from men. Bangladeshi women generally have no direct control over the means of production or other social and economic resources, but must seek security through association with husbands, their families and sons.

The low status of Bangladeshi women has been widely documented (Youssef 1974, Caldwell 1978, Cain 1978 and 1979, T.A. Abdullah and S.A. Zeidenstein 1982). In fact, it has been argued that women's dependency on men in Bangladesh is greater than that of women in patriarchal societies of other third world nations. Dyson and Moore (1983) have made this point in a comparison of women in Bangladesh to those in West Bengal and India.

While specific authors differ in their interpretation of the mechanisms through which gender asymmetry works, there is general agreement that it does not encourage innovation, but adherence to what are believed to be the prescribed roles for women: 1) to bear and raise children and to see in a large family, especially in sons, a safeguard against pervasive risk and adversity, 2) to perform familial rather than extra-familial roles, avoiding contact with the "public realm", especially the world of employment and contact with strangers.

This study seeks to explore the notion that the Matlab Project has been instrumental in introducing innovative behaviors thereby affecting women's status. We hypothesize that the project has improved gender inequality through two key mechanisms:

One causal path through which the Matlab Project is hypothesized to affect women's status is the opportunity it provides for meaningful labor force participation by women. Working as village level service providers in an effectively organized family planning program has proven to be a unique channel for meaningful work. Contrary to the expectations that women, especially from high status families, would, in the cultural context of this rural, conservative society, not be allowed to work, the Matlab program has succeeded in recruiting educated female service providers from upper class backgrounds. Labor force participation is hypothesized to increase the status of service providers through 1) community-wide prestige derived from the fact that their new professional roles are perceived to be beneficial for the community, and 2) increased domestic authority as a result of their new income generating capacity.

Changes in the status of the CHW must not only be viewed at the micro level, in terms of their own lives, but also at the level of village institutions. Female service providers function at the community level. Behavior changes facilitated by them, as well as their own increased community prestige and domestic power, provide a new standard for women who wish to exchange the traditional prestige of seclusion for the influence and prestige derived from a modern service role.

The second causal path through which the Matlab Project is hypothesized to affect women's status is to facilitate innovation in reproductive decisions-making. Given the strong norms of what are appropriate roles for women, reproductive decision-making is passive in nature. The costs or benefits of additional children are not consciously weighed. Even where additional children are considered a burden, women often do not feel in a position to depart from conventional norms and assert control over their fertility.

We hypothesize that the female outreach worker facilitates innovative behavior by encouraging women to assert control over their fertility (Maloney, Aziz and Sarker 1981). She introduces an element of choice into a cultural context where childbearing represents a learned, unquestioned response to the very definition of what it means to be a woman, and facilitates in a variety of ways the process of adopting innovative behavior: reducing anxieties about its negative side-effects, assisting with familial dissent, facilitating access to services, etc.

d. Specific Aims

The specific aims of the study are to assess:

1. Changes in CHW's Domestic Authority:

The extent to which income generation, acquisition of new skills and knowledge, and a new standing within the community have changed the domestic authority of CHWs; husband-wife decision-making in the area of family finance, especially with regard to the income earned by the CHW; type of resources generated by the CHW, especially with regard to the acquisition of land, one of the defining characteristics of patriarchal control in traditional societies; the extent of the CHW's control over the division of domestic labor; and their influence on the educational objectives for daughters. Focus will be on continuity and change in the various dimensions of domestic authority. Perspectives of both CHWs and their husbands will be compared.

2. CHW's Role as Community Resource:

The extent to which village women can turn to the CHW as a trusted friend in times of crisis or need for information and guidance in areas that are unrelated to health or family planning, such as family conflicts, wife beating, or education and job prospects for daughters.

3. CHW's Community Prestige:

The extent to which community leaders perceive the CHW's role as a legitimate and useful function in the community; acceptance of women's role outside of the confines of the home; extent to which the CHW has been accepted as a role model in the eyes of community leaders, facilitating community level support for women's educational and labor force activities.

4. CHW's Role in Facilitating Innovation in Reproductive Behavior:

The extent to which village women have come to view the CHW as a trusted person who provides reliable guidance and assistance in reproductive decision-making; the extent to which the perception of the CHW has changed with time.

The extent to which the CHW is viewed as a resource to women, providing a link to the outside world, and assisting with familial dissent especially over women's interest in using contraceptive; the extent to which the CHW is viewed as having influenced contraceptive use, continuity of use; or the choice of method.

5. Perceived Consequences of Family Size Limitation or Spacing For Women:

The extent to which women perceive their lives as having changed as a consequence of contraceptive use or spacing.

e. Data and Methodology

Surveys have not measured the dimensions of social status adequately, nor have they been able to reveal the process through which change is generated or constrained. Understanding of causal and contextual configurations must be obtained through

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The extent to which community leaders perceive the CHW's role as a legitimate and useful function in the community; acceptance of women's role outside of the confines of the home; extent to which the CHW has been accepted as a role model in the eyes of community leaders, facilitating community level support for women's educational and labor force activities.

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present understanding of the dynamics of women's status, as affected by fertility control programs, does not lend itself to the standardization of procedures (necessary for the application of) statistical methods.

The outcome will be an analytic description of the influence of programmatic activities on women's status. Concepts and propositions of the women's status and family planning program literature will guide specific themes and questions to be pursued in focus group discussions. Transcribed and translated records of discussions will be subjected to content analysis which will provide the basis for generating new empirical propositions concerning the potential of programmatic interventions to initiate a transition towards gender balance in traditional societies.

f. Significance

The study would lead to a greater appreciation of the impact of successful service programs, especially in terms of their contribution in establishing role models for women and encouraging innovation. Recognition of service programs as facilitating not only individual but institutional change would produce a more complete understanding of the significance of service programs.

g. Facilities Required

No additional facilities will be required to conduct this study.

h. Time Schedule

It is hoped that pretesting can be initiated in late November. Fieldwork and transcripts are to be completed by March; a first analysis by the end of April.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cain, Mead, Syeda Rokeya Khanam, and Shamsun Nahar, "Class, Patriarchy, and Women's Work in Bangladesh", Population and Development Review 5, no. 3, (September 1979): 405-438
- Cain, Mead, "The Household Life Cycle and Economic Mobility in Rural Bangladesh", Population and Development Review 4, no. 3 (September 1978): 421-438
- Caldwell, John, "A Theory of Fertility: From High Plateau to Destabilization", Population and Development Review 4, no. 4 (December 1978): 553-578
- Dyson, Tim and Mick Moore, "On Kinship Structure, Female Autonomy, and Demographic Behavior in India", Population and Development Review 9, no. 1 (March 1983): 36-60
- Maloney, C., K.M.A. Aziz and P.C. Sarker, Beliefs and Fertility in Bangladesh, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1981.
- T.A. Abdullah and S.A. Zeidenstein, Village Women of Bangladesh - Prospects for Change (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982).
- Youssef, Nadia Haggag, Women and Work in Developing Societies, Population Monograph Series No.15, Institute for International Studies the University of California, Berkeley, 1974

SECTION III: BUDGET

(November 20, 1986 - May 20, 1987)

Sl. No.	Description	Cost in Taka	Cost in US Dollars
1.	Personnel services*	0	0
2.	Travel and Transportation:		
	Dhaka-Matlab 20 Round Trips	14,280	
	Speed Boats 4 days/week 6 weeks	48,000	
	Country Boat	6,000	
3.	Supplies and Equipment*		
	Total	58,280**	2,009

* All personnel costs and supplies and equipment costs are covered under other MCHFP Extension Project

** Conversion rate Tk. 29.00 = US\$ 1.00.

STATEMENT TO BE READ TO RESPONDENTS ON THE NATURE OF THE STUDY,
TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED, AND RIGHT TO REFUSE TO
PARTICIPATE OR WITHDRAW

Statement for CHWs:

ICDDR,B is conducting research on the role of the CHW in the Matlab service program. We are interested in your observations about how work as CHW has affected your personal life and your role in the community. We will discuss your views and your experience as CHW in group meetings with 4-5 other CHWs, lasting approximately 2-3 hours. We will appreciate your free comments. These will be tape recorded. We assure complete anonymity to participate in the discussions as well as to withdraw from the discussions whenever you feel so.

Statement for CHW-Husbands

ICDDR,B is conducting research on the role of the CHW in the Matlab service program. We are interested in your observations about how your wife's work has affected your personal life and her role in the community. We will discuss your views in group meetings with 4-5 other husbands of CHWs, lasting approximately 2-3 hours. We will appreciate your free comments. These will be tape recorded. We assure complete anonymity to participate in the discussions as well as to withdraw from the discussions whenever you feel so.

Statement for Community Leaders and Community Women

ICDDR,B is conducting research on the role of the CHW in the Matlab service program. We are interested in your observations on topics related to her role in the community and the influence she has had through her visits to households. We will discuss your views on the CHW in group meetings of 5-6 individuals, lasting approximately 2 hours. We will appreciate your free comments. These will be tape recorded. We assure complete anonymity of your responses. You are free to decide whether or not to participate in the discussions as well as to withdraw from the discussions whenever you feel so.