

Capacity Building Workshop: Project Management Series
24th -26th April 2003
TARAGram, Orchha, M.P.

Resource Persons:

1. Dr. A.K. Basu, Society for Rural Industrialisation, Ranchi.
2. Mr. Anwar Jaffri, Ekalavya, Bhopal.
3. Mr. Makarand S, Green Earth, Pune.

This three days workshop was divided into six sessions, which dealt with the following topics:

- Development Challenges and Civil Society
- PACS themes and local context
- Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) in the context of PACS (Objectives-activities-outcomes)
- Indicators and Milestones
- Financial Management and Reporting and
- Feedback session

Inaugural Session

The workshop was initiated with the welcome speech by Mr. H.C Srivastava, General Manager (ISB), TARAGram Orchha. He further, stressed upon the issues under PACS programme by stating that grant under this programme is available for the 'softer or intangible issues'. At the outset, he made it clear that this programme does not focus on the 'service delivery aspect'. He also gave a brief background of the programme and how did it come in Indian setting. He informed the participants that prior to inception of the programme, a series of consultations (around three years) were held with the Indian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in order to get their perceptions, concerns, aspirations and expectations from the Indian state.

His talk was followed by Dr. A.K Basu, as a resource person, requested the participants to speak out their concerns, perceptions and share the experiences in order to enrich the workshop as well as to treat as an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences . The total 45 participants from 15 CSOs across all the 6 PACS states attended this workshop which intended primarily to the efficient management of the project.

Participant's expectations:

In the beginning of the workshop, participant's expectations were tried to gather in a participatory manner. At the end of the exercise, it appeared that some of the expectations were not directly linked to the workshop. Rather more to do with the overall programme. This exercise turned out to be a helpful at the end of the programme when the evaluation exercise of the entire programme was carried out. Some of the important concerns which participants raised were:

- How to do networking?
- Define development.
- Documentation of the success stories.
- How to counter government's false allegation?
- Strengthening of self-help groups (SHGs).

- Issue of women's participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- Strengthening of Programme Management Skills.
- Platform for learning particularly for the new generation of social activist.
- Advocacy: how to influence state's policy?
- What would be the approach to strengthen 'Gram Sabha'?
- Issue of Gender: grassroots reality
- How to strengthen our actions at the field level?
- How to strengthen our implementation approach?
- Replicability of the approaches.

Development Challenges and Civil Society

Rationale behind PACS programme

Primarily, the commitment of Department for International Development (DFID) to the UN's millennium development goal i.e 'to eradicate poverty and hunger and improving the lives by year 2015' has been the driving force behind the initiation of the programme in India. The millennium development goal also promotes gender equality and empower women, which PACS also stresses upon under its thematic concerns.

Gender Equity

Ms. Kiran Sharma after spelling out the genesis, rationale and brief background of the PACS programme in India, she talked about the gender equity in general and in the context of PACS in particular. In the process of her discussion, she explained some of the gender stereotype practices in our day to day life and raised some preconceived notions linked to gender. She further mentioned some of the crucial factors responsible for gender disparity such as, social norms, rules and practices; cultural values and beliefs. In addition, she also brought some startling fact about involvement of women in the informal economy. Women contribute substantially in nation's economic growth whereas they do not get reward according to their contribution. She further, explained the conceptual issue linked to the meaning "Gender". She described that gender is about being more sensitive to the differential realities of men's and women's lives. Generally, it refers to social and cultural distinctions between males and females. And therefore, it considers as a social construct, usually based on stereotype of 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviour. It is about equality and redistributive justice. In short, the quest for gender equality reflects the belief that sexual differences have no social or political significance.

Difference between 'Equity' and 'Equality':

There was a discussion over the meaning and differences of equity and equality and it revealed that equity stands for positive discrimination or it is a need based approach rather than equal division of resources or power etc. It was felt that 'equity' is the first step in order to attain equality.

Low participation of women:

The reasons behind low participation of women in the economic activities are due to following:

- Self exclusion
- Shortage of time
- The exclusion of the poor may also be related to supply side factors.

PACS response to the Millennium Goals:

- Strengthening of local self governance with adequate and equitable women's participation
- An increasing awareness to information about entitlements
- Enabling changes in societal attitudes
- Policy initiative.

Role of Civil Society in the context of PACS thematic areas

Dr. A. K. Basu started his session with the general discussion over the word 'poor' and 'poverty' and how it is linked to the programme. He initiated the discussion and asked the participants to define the identity of the poor. At the end of the discussion it came out that poor people are known for their 'high management capability', which helps to maximize their minimum resources. And PACS is based on this philosophy. In this context, some of the important concerns are:

- Desire is the outcome of need perception.
- Capability is the tool for fulfilling desire
- Poverty is the gap between desire and capability.

Overall belief of the PACS programme is NOT to give up hopes.

PACS thematic areas facilitate conducive environment so that poor can express their concerns and also to realize their entitlements. For instance, local self governance offers an opportunity to participate in the local governing institutions, which affect their day to day life. In addition, thematic issue 'Women Empowerment' facilitate positive environment to strengthen women position in our society and also facilitate women to gain voices. Therefore, issue of women empowerment strengthens the given opportunities to realize the goal of a just society for women. To create an opportunity, thematic issue of Policy Advocacy also tries to create an adequate space to express the concerns for poor and marginalized communities and groups. Whereas them 'social cohesion', it paves the way for togetherness and collectivism to combat the prevailing unfair and unjust practices in the society.

PACS belief that due to various government sponsored programmes, it has dehumanized the poor and therefore the challenge for PACS is to humanize the entire masses.

NGO sector in India

It includes some of the formations like:

- Government sponsored Autonomous Organisation
- Industry sponsored Development Organisation
- NGO under patronage of Political Parties
- Religious Organisation
- Organisation of Professions
- Association of Practitioners
- Community based Organisation
- Voluntary Development Organisation (VDO)
- Volunteer or Voluntary Person

The rules and procedures of the government of India restrict most of these formations to get grant under the PACS programme and therefore a large majority of such formations have not been covered under the programme. The only formation, i.e, Voluntary Development Organisation (VDO) meets the rules and standard laid down by the government and therefore they have been primarily selected for this programme.

Capacity Building Initiative

Initial Areas:

1. Project Management : Logical Framework Analysis
: Milestones and Indicators
: Financial Management
2. Information/Knowledge management to establish a system of effective communication.
3. Sectoral linkages to strengthen the PACS initiatives
4. Networking for Advocacy

State level workshops/consultations:

- Peer group review workshop
- Thematic workshop

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Logical Framework Analysis (LFA)

Objectives: What we are trying to achieve through our respective projects?

Inputs: To implement the project successful, what are the resources we required?

General problems in Programme Development

- To conceptualise the problem in isolation.
- Inability to find out the root cause of the problem
- To strike at the root cause of the problem.

Mr. Anwar introduced the topic for discussion, "Weak Panchayati Raj System vis-à-vis role of the civil society". At the end of the discussion, there were several reasons identified for the same. The summary of the discussion is being analysed below.

As institutions of governance, Panchayats offer an opportunity for strengthening the social base for democratic decision-making and for facilitating a people-centred process of change and development.

Though Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) have provided adequate space for the marginalized (women and dalits) sections of society through reservation, yet some barriers remain— principal among them being low level of literacy, domination by elites, lack of awareness, corruption and the prevalence of patriarchal values. Compounding this is the lack of, or unavailability of adequate information on PRIs. This has the effect of diluting the positive dimensions of the constitutional amendment. Awareness about it needs to be backed by information.

#Why Civil Society in PRIs

The inefficiency and the unresponsiveness of the state have led to a crisis of legitimacy of state institutions. The failure of government agencies to protect the interests of the underprivileged groups has created a situation in which the disillusionment of marginalized groups and their consequent alienation from the process of governance has become conspicuous. It is in this context that civil society space became the arena for voluntary

groups to raise their voice. Hence, the growing non-accountability of the state to citizens became the driving force of civil society actions in recent years.

- Needless to mention that lack of information flow, funds, lack of linkages between the three tiers, lack of transparency in functioning, coupled by bureaucratic procedures and non-accountability of line department officials. Thus, reflecting the inefficiency and unresponsiveness of the state institution to the interest of the people. Hence, civil society initiatives are concerned with the gap between what is constitutionally provided, and its frequent violation, appropriation of developmental benefits by the dominant groups, and the non-delivery of basic services. The growing concern of transparency, accountability, self management and self governance in PRIs has drawn the attention of civil society.
- Internal divisions based on caste, gender, education, political affiliation and religious persuasion have created impediments in local governance.

The **Role** of civil society in the arena of Panchayati Raj has been primarily that of intermediation. Civil Society actions have mobilized, organized and empowered the poor and the marginalized.

Information also becomes the basis for assuring accountability of elected representatives and local bodies. Right to information is a fundamental tenet for assuring such transparency and accountability in decision making and resource utilization actions of local bodies.

Monitoring and Indicators

Participant's Expectations:

- How to quantify 'intangible' issues/ soft issues?
- What is the linkage between output and indicators?
- How are indicators useful?
- Where do we connect indicators? (Activity, Output, Objective)
- How flexible indicators can be?
- How to differentiate quantitative and qualitative outputs?
- Whether indicators can show cost/ time effectiveness?
- Universal **Vs** Micro/ specific indicators.
- What are the selection criteria of an indicator?

Monitoring is a mechanism of measuring the progress of all the programmes and activities within a specified timeframe.

Monitoring is meant to help the project manager in implementing the project and achieving the goals of the project in a systematic manner. It is not to be viewed as an externally imposed process. The purpose of monitoring is:

- To give appropriate feed-back to actors, and
- To inform the managers about the possible areas of failures and threats

Difference between Monitoring, Appraisal and Evaluation

Appraisal is the critical analysis of capacities and capabilities. Evaluation is a judgment about the outcomes achieved.

The most important differences is that monitoring can and should be done by a person who is completely involved in the process. An external agent can not be an effective or appropriate monitor.

Indicators

Indicators are data elements that help the analyst determine the measure/ quality of any action. For instance, an assessment of 'the state of health of a person can be made by using a number of indicators that can be measured easily and on which there is general agreement. These could include blood pressure, blood sugar, pulse rate, etc. The individual indicator is not an effective means of making the assessment on which there is general agreement.

Broadly there are four types of indicators that can be used:

- Input measuring physical inputs like time, person power, material equipment.
- Process measuring timeliness, procedural correctness, quality of participation, gender sensitivity etc.
- Output: measurable units of service/ goods.
- Outcome: ones that determine the effectiveness of the overall programme in achieving the goals. This is also called impact indicator in some forms of terminology.

Difference between Output and Outcome indicators

Output by its very definition talks of physical units of products/services.

Outcome talks of the effect that will be made on a long term. For instance, in case of a schooling programme for girls, some of the output indicators could be number of girls passing matriculation, number of girls going on to reach graduation etc.

The outcome should be more lasting and could include number of girls who could get white collared jobs, change in attitude of the girls towards education, increase in the involvement of the girls towards education, increase in the involvement of the girls in decision making affecting their lives etc.

Group Exercise:

The resource person introduced a group exercise for the group. To begin with, he divided the group into four sub-groups and gave each group one goal/ objectives, used by the organization. These goals were:

1. To strengthen gram sabha as a powerful body to the PRIs.
2. Developing capacities and skills of Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
3. To increase awareness, conscientise and organize SCs, STs population.
4. Empowering women to manage direct and control process of change.

All the four groups were asked to prepare outcome indicators on the basis of the given goals/objectives. In the process of making these indicators, most of them realized that making good, simple and clear indicators are not something very easy. The lesson, for the entire group was that good and precise indicators help us to make our plan more realistically. And thereby it becomes easier to implement the project. In addition, means of verification should be very good.

Documentation

Documentation is an act of recording anything—may it be activities, events, experience, achievements, happenings, or for that matter any observations.

Documentation is a purposive exercise, that is to say it serves certain purposes or addresses certain requirements of the organizational functioning.

In the context of PACS, documentation can be useful learning tool. PACS being a social mobilization and community empowerment project, process documentation would also help in creating a pool of knowledge, as also refine the project methodology and management approach.

Moreover, process documentation is about recording happenings. Broadly speaking, it is like writing a story, which unfolds as you move across the pages. It records the events, or happenings, in the life cycle of a project or an activity. The recording could be in an objective manner or from a perspective of an actor in the process. A process document could be as lengthy or as short as the writer wanted to make it, but it should capture all the aspects or stages, of the project or the activity. This, in case of most projects, requires an understanding of the project processes or project cycle, envisaged or defined for the project.

Project cycle is a typical sequence of stages and steps that have to be gone through in order to accomplish the project objectives.

In brief...

- Documentation is purposive and all concerned should know the purpose.
- Process documentation is all about recording the happenings.
- Process Documentation is writing about all stages and steps in the project cycle.
- Defining and understanding of project cycle is a prerequisite.
- The author may write his/her reflections as a part of the diary.
- Analysis of any process document is necessary to make it useful.
- It could be useful in improving the methodology/approach.
- Process documentation may be useful in strategy formulation.

FIANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Mr. Devashish Banerji started this session by introducing his team mates. In his brief discussion, he primarily talked about the importance of transparency in the financial management. He further stressed upon how the identities of civil society organizations (CSOs) are different from the government institutions. Their identities are different, is mainly due to their style of functioning and sense of accountability. In contrast to this, in government set-up, issue of transparency and accountability is something not very visible. Therefore, there is a need for CSOs to maintain their identities by promoting the fair practices in the work vis-à-vis maintaining transparency in their financial transactions.

Later, Mr. Tarun spoke about the financial management and its quarterly reporting in the context of PACS. He also gave emphasis on the reporting pattern and time wise submission of the same. Regarding the reporting formats, he asked the CSOs to complete the suggested format of reporting as per the stipulated time.

Fund flow and financial reporting

Annual budget:

- To be prepared on 25th January every year
To be prepared within the overall sanctioned budget with same costing
- CSO has the flexibility to revise annual work plan and subsequently budget based on ground realities.

Monitoring

Management Consultant (MC) to be informed of the following:

- Any change in important positions of project personnel
- Any change in organization's structure i.e. address, governing board etc.
- Changes in activities between quarters.

Monitoring Field

Frequency of visits:

- Generally once in six months by MC
- In special cases- anytime by Audit firms

Points to be covered by MC

- Accounting
- Internal controls
- Network partner
- Administration/ recurring expenditure
- Compliance

Issues faced by MC

- Reporting to be as per financial quarters and not technical quarters.
- Format and dates to be strictly followed
- Utilization statements to be as per budget with all details.

Open session

To encourage participants to share their experiences, their concerns, successful interventions strategies etc. this session was organized. Some of the participants shared their interventions strategies in their area. They also discussed the lessons they learnt vis-à-vis the existing challenges in the given social and political climate.

Mr. Ashok, ActionAid, Lucknow.

Mr. Akhil, ActionAid, Patna

ActionAid is working with the rat eaters (*Mushar*) community in eastern Bihar and U.P. In U.P, they are working in 75 helmets (tolas) in a district.

Three major problems facing by rat eaters (*Mushar*):

1. Sense of fear
2. Problem of hunger
3. Problem of health.

Recently, government of U.P has announced that those SCs population living on government's land would be automatically entitled for the land where they have been living. Now, the biggest challenge for the civil society formations is to initiate advocacy on this proposal so that the proposal get translated into action.

In Bihar, they are working in 110 villages (4 blocks) in East Champaran district.

The major problem with this community is the issue of migration. They simply lack the feeling of attachment to particular place. And therefore, they prefer to move.

Workshop evaluation

At the end of the programme, participatory evaluation exercise was carried out. Management Consultants (MC) raised five questions to assess the entire workshop. At the end of the exercise, it revealed that most of the participants ranked the programme as a medium level affair. Against this backdrop, now the challenge before the MC is to make the coming workshops more interesting, participatory and informative. Apart from this, qualitative improvement is also another area of concern for the MC.

