

Chapter - 2

Participatory Planning

National Commission on Farmers stressed that relevance of linkages as.....”Farmer participation and feedback should become an integral part of agricultural resource and technology transfer. Considering that majority of our farmers are small and resource poor and depend heavily on public good technologies and information, the public sector agricultural extension men and women should be empowered and sensitized to meet the demands particularly by forging research- extension-education-farmer- market linkages”

Participatory planning is an empowering process. It enables needs/problems to be determined, awareness of them raised and solutions identified. Participatory planning involves conducting planning with the involvement of a number of people. These people can be a whole range of different stakeholders. It helps in harnessing the expert knowledge and values of stakeholders and providing them with collecting forums to make sense of a situation and to develop an effective plan of action. In this way, knowledge products are directly relevant to the context while ownership is fostered amongst stakeholders.

Paulo Freire and Kurt Lewin are the key pioneers of participatory planning. Freire’s belief that poor and exploited people can and should be able to analyse their own reality was a fundamental inspiration for the participatory planning movement. More recently, Robert Chambers has become a key champion of

participatory planning and was a key leader in the creation of 'Participatory Learning for Action' (PLA).

Purpose of participatory planning

The purpose of participatory planning is to create a platform for learning rather than plunging directly into problem solving. The process is expected to enhance

- (1) Identification of the felt needs of the people
- (2) Bringing forth consensus
- (3) The empowerment of local disadvantaged groups
- (4) Integration of local knowledge systems into project design
- (5) Two-way learning process between the project and local people
- (6) Political commitment and support
- (7) Accountability in local governance

Features of Participatory Planning

1. The purpose of participatory planning is to create platform for learning rather than plunging directly in to problem solving.
2. Poor and marginalized influence decision at each stage of the planning cycle.
3. Local data collection and analysis, facilitated by external facilitators.
4. Ensures efficient project service delivery including realistic objectives setting, access to additional resources, establishes relevant criteria for measuring performance, ensures accountability and reduce duplication.
5. Collaborative exercise whereby the needs and voices of the poor and marginalized are negotiated through the planning process.

Awareness building on principles of participatory planning

1. Development should be seen more as a change from the bottom up than from top down.

2. The development process should be managed as a natural organic process rather than according to plans, goals, objectives, targets and schedules, implying that goals and targets may change and, therefore, their timing should be tentative and flexible to make room for adaptation to local conditions.
3. Development programmes should aim to strengthen local organizations and not state and central government bureaucracies. New programmes should be chosen according to their ability to increase local development management capacity. Start with a few schemes to solve some immediate local problems to build local confidence and experience.
4. The development process is supported by local institutions with village panchayats, primary cooperatives, religious, youth, community-based users' and self-help groups playing a lead role. It is more important to make sure that the development process is rooted in a strong local institution than ensuring that local institutions have a grasp of all the finer technical points. It is comparatively easy to arrange technical services from outside than to bring about social involvement and willing popular participation in the development process. Strong local institutions are necessary as support posts quite independently of whatever technical skills and other background they may have.
5. It follows from the above that the development process must be based primarily on confidence and learning rather than on experts and training. It is more important for the people who will take decisions at the local level to have full confidence of the people they represent, than to be trained experts. This also implies that technical staff of departments should work in tandem with local institutions rather than sit on judgement on the plans prepared by these institutions.

Techniques to facilitate participatory planning

- **Intervention logic:** Is a visual model of how a group believes their activities will lead to long term outcomes.
- **Outcome Frameworks:** A Model of how long term outcomes fit together.
- **Strategic Planning:** A process for developing a plan for a number of years to help mobilise groups in common direction.
- **Appreciative Inquiry:** A strength based approach for organisational , or community based planning that seeks to find out what is working and do more of it.
- **Participatory Action Research:** A facilitated process that involves both research and action, a great way to creat solutions together in a complex environment.
- **RRA:** Is a systematic, semi structured activity conducted on-site by a multidisciplinary team with the aim of quickly and efficiently acquiring new information and hypotheses about rural life and rural resources.
- **PRA:** Is a way of enabling local (rural and urban) people to analyze their living conditions, to share the outcomes and to plan their activities. It's a "handing over the stick to the insider" in methods and action.
- **PLA:** Is an approach for learning and organizing participation of local communities and groups for interacting with them, understanding them and learning from them.

Participatory Planning principles

- Citizens have control over the planning process
- Recognises and value ordinary people knowledge
- Ideological commitment to the weakest section of the society
- Participatory planning often results in creation or strengthening of organisations among the poor and the marginalised.
- Significance on mutual understanding and dialogue among the stakeholders.

- Methods important as means for facilitating citizens participation.
- Significance of citizens education, civil society engagement and capacity building of citizen leaders and community based organisations
- Role of external facilitator is important.

How to initiate participatory planning

(i) Identify local needs, particularly of rural poor families

- The best way to find what people need and what they see as possible solutions to their problems is to ask them directly. This also creates awareness and willingness among the people to take part in any action that will follow.
- But before asking what they want, it is necessary to establish a common ground of understanding with them. There are bound to be conflicting interests within a community. Special skills and sincerity are needed to build consensus.
- It is important to ensure steadfast community support for a pro-poor development initiative. Local officials, CBOs, field workers of voluntary organizations, teachers, women, and retired people, must be involved in the consultations and discussions.

(ii) Collect basic data

- Once local contacts are established, the next step is to collect, with the people's help, basic data about the community, characteristics of the area, resources situation, socio-economic status and other relevant facts.
- The aim is to get a factual baseline picture which will help in setting goals and measuring changes brought about by the project at a later stage.
- It is helpful at this stage is to associate with local officials and NGO functionaries in collecting and verifying facts from different sources.
- To seek people's cooperation, it is important to respect their ideas and abilities. The focus should be on the community as a whole and seeking its commitment to helping the poor.

- Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a practical tool for participatory data collection and analysis.

(iii) Formation of working groups

- It is helpful is to form working groups that include local officials, to prepare status reports and develop perspectives.
- The aim of the working groups is to analyse and compare data, draw inferences and identify priority areas for intervention. This is aimed at greater clarity and strengthening of participation of local people, particularly the rural poor, by giving greater local planning responsibility and establishment of good working relationship between technical planning experts and the local people. Importance is to be given to detailed specification of the roles of participant individuals, groups and committees in carrying out the tasks.
- Conflicts and disagreements may arise in the process, which are not in themselves a negative factor, but have to be properly resolved and managed at every stage of decision-making.

(iv) Formulation of the objectives

- The first step in participatory local planning is to define precisely what specific objectives are to be achieved, which should be stated in concrete terms, e.g. increasing i) incomes of identified households, ii) production of certain crops and iii) literacy among locally elected women officials.
- The objective may not always be quantifiable, particularly when it involves attitudinal changes. Its still helps to be as specific as possible so that people can see how much change has taken place.

(v) Deciding the strategy

- This is the most difficult part of participatory local planning as it involves assessing and mobilizing needed resources and choosing the planning

methods. It is important to specify: a) resources that are locally available and those needed from outside. (people with skills, funds, raw material inputs, etc.); b) if resources are available when needed; and c) who should be approached, who will approach and with whose help to secure these.

- Consider alternative local planning methods and approaches such as (i) whether to contract a job to private individuals or to do it on a cooperative basis; ii) whether to focus on several small household-based units or one big unit; and iii) whether to train local people as trainers for the jobs or to hire trained personnel from outside.
- Once a course of action is chosen, it should be explained and specified in clear terms to avoid confusion and misunderstanding among the local stakeholders.

(vi) Ensuring feasibility

- The working groups at this point should consider whether the objectives are realistic. It is important to ensure that: i) assumptions and stipulations regarding the availability of resources, managerial competence and technical expertise are realistic; ii) proposed activities are economically viable; and iii) local market can absorb the expected outputs.
- It is important to identify potential project beneficiaries and check how the benefits would flow to them.

(vii) Preparing the work plan

- This is a blueprint for decentralized project management drawn up by the project implementation committee, specifying the ‘what, who, when and how’ of local project implementation.
- The work plan should contain the following information in simple tabular form: (i) all activities for implementation of the project; (ii) names(s) of the person(s) responsible for each activity; (iii) starting and completion time for each activity; and (iv) the means to carry out the activities.

- It should also define the outputs expected from each activity to measure performance during implementation or on completion of the project, for effective monitoring and evaluation.

Micro planning

- The Plan for the smallest unit of Administration (Panchayats in India)is called a micro plan
- The Gram Sabha (Village Council) members of each ward plan for their ward.(Peoples plan).
- These Peoples Plan are put together to make a panchayat level plan (Microplan)

Challenges of Participatory Planning

- Can we address all the expressed needs of the community?
- Addressing the differences in languages, written and oral culture
- Addressing conflict during planning process
- Ensuring Participation of the weakest
- Being sensitive to time and cost implications for the poor

A typology of participation: how people participate in development programmes and projects

Passive Participation

People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.

Participation in Information Giving

People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researches using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to

influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

Participation by Consultation

People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.

Participation for Material Incentive

People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash, or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the field but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

Functional Participation

People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These instructions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.

Interactive Participation

People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of

systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-Mobilization

People participate by taking initiative independent of external institution to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

Participatory Methods

The creative ingenuity of practitioners worldwide has greatly increased the range of participatory methods in use (see RRA Notes, 1988-1994; IDS/IIED, 1994; Pretty *et al.*, 1995; Chambers, 1992a, 1992b; Mascarenhas *et al.*, 1991; KKKU, 1987; Conway, 1987). Many have been drawn from a wide range of non-agricultural contexts and were adapted to new needs. The methods can be put into four classes: for group and team dynamics, for sampling, for interviewing and dialogue, and for visualization and diagramming. These methods collected into unique approaches, or assemblages of methods, constitute systems of learning and action. In this section, some key methods are briefly described.

Participation calls for collective analysis and good rapport. Even a sole researcher must work closely with local people. Ideally, though, teams of investigators work together in interdisciplinary and intersect oral teams. By working as a group, the investigators can approach a situation from different perspectives, carefully monitor one another's work, and carry out a variety of tasks simultaneously. Groups can be powerful when they function well, because performance and output are likely to be greater than the sum of the individual members. But shared perceptions, essential for group or community action, have to be carefully negotiated. Yet the complexity of multidisciplinary teamwork is

generally poorly understood. Various workshop and field methods are used to facilitate this process of group formation:

1. *Team contracts.* Team contracts developed by all the team members help to ensure good group dynamics and may include agreements to hold evening discussions and morning brainstorming sessions. One person may be elected to monitor team interactions to provide feedback. The monitor can make a note of each member's location and record interactions by drawing a circle around individuals' names when they speak or an arrow from talker to person being talked to, with duration of speech recorded in seconds. The results are used simply for showing team members how the discussion developed. It then becomes clear who has dominated and who was quiet.
2. *The night halt.* Rapport between outsiders and villagers is facilitated by staying in the village. Many have made this an essential part of participatory analysis and planning. It provokes change in outsiders' attitudes: they sleep and eat as villagers do; it allows for early morning and evening discussions when people are less busy; and it is an explicit commitment by outsiders to village life.
3. *Work sharing.* When outsiders are taught something by villagers, roles are reversed. Professionals soon learn how much skill is required, say, to plough a furrow, transplant rice, weed, lop tree fodder, cut firewood, dig compost, and wash clothes. Such activities prompt changes in attitude and help to build rapport.
4. *Rapid report writing, with self-correcting notes.* It is essential to record, as a team, the key findings before members disperse to their own organizations. Report writing is made easier by writing a brief summary of how diagrams were constructed and of the key findings. Individuals can be encouraged to keep a private diary or series of notes to focus on things they would like to improve the next time.

5. *Shared presentations.* The key findings should always be presented to villagers and outsiders. This is an important opportunity for crosschecking and feedback. Professionals present and invite comment and criticism. This is a fundamental reversal of roles and is crucial to establishing the trustworthiness of the findings.

To ensure that multiple perspectives are represented, practitioners must be clear about who is participating. Communities are rarely homogenous, so there is always the danger of assuming that those participating are representative. Those missing, though, are usually the poorest and most disadvantaged. Sampling is an essential part of these participatory approaches, and several methods are available:

1. *Transect walks and direct observation.* These are systematic walks with key informants through the area of interest, observing, asking, listening, looking, and seeking problems and solutions. The findings can be mapped on a transect diagram. Most transect walks result in the outsiders discovering surprising local practices such as indigenous conservation practices, multiple uses of plants, and a great variety of crops. It has been instructive for many professionals to realize how much they do not see or do not think to ask about.
2. *Wealth rankings and social maps.* Wealth ranking is used to classify households according to relative wealth or well-being. Informants sort cards, each with one household name on it, into piles. The wealthiest are put at one end, the poorest at the other, and as many piles as desired are made. The process is repeated with at least three informants. Another method is to conduct the ranking directly on a social map. Villagers are then asked to indicate on the houses the relative wealth classes. Individual assets such as land ownership, animals, and tools can be marked for each household. Wealth rankings are useful for leading into other discussions on livelihoods and vulnerability; producing a baseline against which future intervention impact

can be measured; providing a sample frame to cross-check the relative wealth of informants who have been or will be interviewed; and producing local indicators of welfare.

Sensitive interviewing and dialogue are a third element of these systems of participatory learning. For the reconstructions of reality to be revealed, the conventional dichotomy between the interviewer and respondent should not be permitted to develop. Interviewing is therefore structured around a series of techniques that promote a sensitive and mutually beneficial dialogue. This should appear more like a structured conversation than an interview:

1. *Semi-structured interviews (SSI)*. This is guided interviewing and listening in which only some of the questions and topics are predetermined; other questions arise during the interview. The interviews appear informal and conversational, but are actually carefully controlled and structured. Using a guide or checklist, the multidisciplinary team poses open-ended questions and probes topics as they arise. New avenues of questioning are pursued as the interview develops. SSIs are a central part of all participatory methods.
2. *Types, sequencing, and chains of interviews*. Many types of interviews may be combined in sequences and chains. These include key informant interviews, by asking who the experts are and then putting together a series of interviews (e.g., men on ploughing, women on transplanting and weeding, shopkeepers for credit and inputs); and group interviews, which may be groups convened to discuss a particular topic (focused or specialist groups), groups comprising a mix of people whose different perceptions illuminate an issue (structured groups), casual groups, and community groups.
3. The fourth element is the emphasis on diagramming and visual construction. In formal surveys, information is taken by interviewers, who transform what

people say into their own language. By contrast, diagramming by local people gives them a share in the creation and analysis of knowledge, providing a focus for dialogue which can be sequentially modified and extended. Local categories, criteria, and symbols are used during diagramming. Rather than answering questions which are directed by the values of the outside professional, local people can explore creatively their own versions of their worlds. Visualizations therefore help to balance dialogue and increase the depth and intensity of discussion:

4. *Participatory mapping and modeling.* This involves constructing, on the ground or on paper, maps or models, using materials such as sticks, stones, grasses, wood, cigarette packets, tree leaves, coloured sands and soils, *Rangoli* powders, coloured chalk, pens, and paper. Great play is made of the issue of *who holds the stick or pen*. The person who holds the stick talks about what is most important to him or her. As maps take shape, more people become involved, and so want to contribute and make sequential changes. There are many types of maps: resource maps of catchments, villages, forests, fields, farms, home gardens; social maps of residential areas of a village; wealth rankings and household assets surveys on social maps; health maps, where the health status of each family member is shown on each house, using coloured stickers or other markers (categories might include cases of malnutrition, ear infection, jaundice, and the like); topical maps such as aquifer maps drawn by the water diviner or soils maps by soils experts; impact monitoring maps, where villagers record or map pest incidence, input usage, weed distribution, soil quality, and so forth. Some of the illuminating maps combine historical views with those of the present.
5. *Seasonal calendars and activity profiles.* Seasonal constraints and opportunities can be diagrammed month by month throughout the year.

Ceremonies can be used as a crosscheck so that names of months are agreed upon. People use pieces of stick, draw histograms in the dust or with chalk, or make piles of stones, seeds, or powders to represent relative quantities and patterns of rainfall, soil moisture, crops, labour, food consumption, illnesses, prices, animal fodder, fuel, migration, pests, income, expenditure, debt, children's games, and so on. Seasonal calendars can be drawn in linear fashion with twelve months to show a typical year or eighteen months to illustrate changes between years, or they can be drawn in a circle. Daily patterns of activity can be similarly explored by charting typical activities for each hour of the day, amount of effort, time taken, and location of work. These can be compared for men, women, the old, the young, and others.

6. *Time lines and local histories.* Historical analyses have been found to be a good icebreaker for field exercises and include detailed accounts of the past, of how things have changed, particularly focusing on relationships and trends. These include technology histories and review, crop histories and biographies, livestock breed histories, education change, and population change. Folklore and songs are valuable resources for exploring history.
7. *Venn and network diagrams.* Venn diagrams involve the use of circles of paper or card to represent people, groups, and institutions. These are arranged to represent real linkages and distance between individuals and institutions. Overlap indicates flows of information, and distance on the diagram represents lack of contact.
8. *Matrix scoring and pairwise ranking.* These methods are for learning about local people's categories, criteria, choice, and priorities. For pairwise ranking, items of interest are compared pair by pair; informants are asked which of the two they prefer, and why. Matrix scoring takes criteria for the rows in a matrix and items for columns, and people complete the boxes row by row. The items

may be ordered for each of the criteria (e.g., for six trees, indicate from best to worst for fuel wood, fodder, erosion control, and fruit supply); or participants may put stones, seeds, or berries into piles for relative scoring.

Matrices are also useful for ordering and structuring other types of information and include attributes matrices for technologies, problem-opportunity matrices, and manual discriminate technique matrices for contrast comparisons.