



“शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतन्त्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।”

— इन्दिरा गाँधी

“Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

— Indira Gandhi

Block

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PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

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BLOCK 4 PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

People's participation leadership and capacity building help in better governance, participation and implementation of development programmes. Capacity building helps in the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development and human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems. Capacity building is facilitated through the provision of technical support activities, training, specific technical assistance and resource networking. The understanding of the methodologies of decentralized governance and functions of grass root institutions like Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha enables you to comprehend the democratic processes of our political system.

Unit 1, **People's Participation in Governance and Development**, focuses on building our understanding on the meaning and concepts of people's participation in the local self governance in development. It also discusses the importance of local self Governance, people's participation in development.

Unit 2, **Participatory Tools and Methods**, describes how the participatory tools and methods are the means by which the principles of participation are translated into the actual practice of development. Participatory methods ensure that all stakeholders become involved in a number of different activities which are integral to the development process. They provide a structured approach to participation with clear guidelines of who should be involved, when and to what extent. It also covers how the participatory tools are specific activities designed to encourage joint analysis, learning and action.

UNIT 1 PEOPLES PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPEMNT

Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 People's Participation- Meaning and Concept
- 1.3 Importance of People's Participation in Governance and Development
- 1.4 Gram Sabha and Peoples Participation
- 1.5 Ward Sabha and Peoples Participation
- 1.6 Inclusive Participation
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Keywords
- 1.9 References and Suggested Readings
- 1.10 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The challenges of development have opened many avenues unexplored in the journey of a nation. The traditional approach of centralized planning and top down approach focused on economic growth as an objective. This approach is based on presumption that higher economic growth leads to redistributive justice to all. However, decades of experiments and experiences have proved otherwise. The search for new alternatives has thrown many avenues which focus on people centric development, decentralized governance and participatory approach to development.

Decentralized governance, meaning involving all stake holders in the process of development is an instrument for promoting equitable development. In this unit, we will focus on people's participation in governance and development. There have been significant changes in policy directions for development like reactivation of Panchayat Raj in rural India and more participatory Municipal Bodies. We shall study the meaning of people's participation and why it is a necessity in today's context and how the same is being ensured through formal and informal institutional structures at grass root level. The understanding of the methodologies of decentralized governance and functions of grass root institutions like Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha enables you to comprehend the democratic processes of our political system.

After studying this unit, you should be able to –

- Understand the meaning and concepts of participation, Local Self Governance in development.
- Discuss the importance of local Self Governance, people's participation in development.

- Comprehend the role of Grass root institutions like Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha, and Panchayati Raj Institutions in development through self governance.
- Differentiate between various methods of Governance.

1.2 PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION - MEANING AND CONCEPT

1.2.1 Meaning of Participation

Most simply defined, participation means taking part. In the context of development theories, participation means direct involvement of all those people in the decision making process which is likely to affect their lives. “The way participation is defined largely depends upon the context and background in which participation is applied. While the Economic Commission for Latin America (1973) considers contribution by the people to Public Programmes to the complete exclusion of any involvement in the decision making process as participation. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) maintains that participation includes the people’s involvement in the entire decision making process. FAO (1982) emphasizes participation in all decision making process but by the people’s own Organization and through self organized actions. Paul (1987) introduces the concept of enhancement of well being in terms of values cherished by the communities as being the ultimate objective of participation.” (Somesh Kumar, 2002)

Participation can be seen in two extreme forms. It can begin as passive participation where people are told what is going to happen or happened. People are just objects on whom action is thrust. On the other extreme is self mobilisation where people participate by taking initiatives independent of external Institutions to change systems. Participation starts from the conception stage up to the delivery of the product and its consumption. The process involves decision making at various stages independent of any external influence. Participation can be categorized into various stages in which degree of involvement varies. The Typology of Participation are:

- Passive Participation
- Participation in Information giving
- Participation by consultation
- Participation by Material Incentives
- Functional Participation
- Interactive Participation
- Self Mobilisation

In the above typology passive participation is at the one end of the spectrum where people are told what to do while on the other end is the self Mobilisation where local people themselves are in total command. As one moves from passive participation to self Mobilisation control of local people increases and outsiders decreases. “The principle of participation is widely recognized as a right in itself. The right to take part in the conduct of public affairs means that every person and all people are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy civil, economic, social and political development.” (Zubair Meenai, 2008)

Participation as a concept has found favour among masses, policy makers, politicians, and sociologists alike – Croft and Bensford (1994) have elaborated some arguments for participation.

- Most people want to be involved - People have intrinsic desire to get involved.
- People have right to be involved - people have the legal entitlements to be involved, the rights to redress, to comment and to be consulted on issues impacting their lives and society.
- Participation has accountability - Accountability means not just being responsive but also answerable to the people. People have the right to know what is happening and why? Increased direct involvement of the service users results in more effective accountability of the service providers.
- Participation makes more efficient and cost effective services.
- Involving people challenges institutionalized discrimination.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) looks at participation from three perspectives: (a) Functional, (b) Empowering and (c) Philosophical. Participation is understood at various levels. Conceptualization of participation has ranged from contributions by the people to Public Programme to the involvement of people in the entire decision making process. (Zubair Meenai, 2008).

PARTICIPATION

Functional participation: to increase efficiency and effectiveness of Research & Development.

Empowering Participation: To increase the independence, awareness and capacity of marginalized groups.

Philosophical Participation: Participation to allow expression of alternative views.

Source: FAO Org./Participation

Participation as a process - If seen as a process in development Programme, there is involvement of local people in implementation of externally designed initiative. There is collaboration along with external agency and local population whereby externally designed development activities are implemented in a participatory manner. Thus, participation is a means or instrument to implement a programme to achieve desired goals.

Participation as an end - Participation as a goal of a policy initiative entails empowering people in terms of their acquiring skills, knowledge and experience to take greater responsibility for their development. People are provided access to power and resources to create opportunities which are self sustaining.

Bastain (1997) sketches four different thematic variations in the concept of participation. (Murleedharan, 2006)

- First, participation is employed as a simple means of getting unpaid labour from the people. It serves the purpose of creating a sense of belonging among the public about the public utilities created.
- Second, Participation is interpreted as an attempt to provide self reliance.
- Third, participation approach is resorted as a technique to create ideal villages.

- Finally, participation is resorted to as a method of Project Management.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

“The essence of development is nothing but peoples’ participation. There are many components that are involved in development like money, material, resources, technology, human etc. Of all the social factors, human factors are the crucial elements. People are the pivot around whom the entire development processes are supposed to revolve.”(Joel and Bhore, 2003).

The above statement underlines the importance of peoples’ participation in development process. Ever since societies have strived to develop, the methods of development have been widely debated. The early phase of development era emphasized on the Top down approach to development based on trickle down theory. During this phase, the emphasis was on planning at the top with focus on achieving higher growth rate. This approach was based on the premise that centralized planning ensures higher growth which automatically trickles down to grass root level. “During 1950s and 1960s – modernisation theories had been so pervasive that it was almost impossible to separate modernisation from development linked to capitalism and economic growth.”(Zubair Meenai, 2008).

However, the experience gained during this time reflected that these development strategies were losing battle against the poverty and hunger. Even a higher growth rate could not ensure equitable growth and disparities in development levels continued to either remain or get wider and wider. Participation as a concept and a strategy of development is an outcome of the profound disillusionment with the established development strategy in post Industrial Revolution period. The experiences of the Fifties and Sixties have demonstrated the fundamental weakness of the Top down, GNP focused, growth centered strategy of development based on professional expertise and modernized technologies. The development strategy followed during this period emphasized economic growth and industrialization in the context of increasingly centralized planning and control over the distribution of resources. (Joel and Bhore, 2003).

The origin of participatory approach to development is based on the failure of the growth centered approach to achieve all around development. This phenomenon was observed across the countries and international agencies like UN, UNDP, ADB, FAO, hotly debated the feasibility of this model. Gunnar Myrdal, the Noble Prize winning Economist in the late 1960s urged governments to plan their economies actively, adopt social policies that enhanced people’s welfare and take steps to redistribute income and wealth. This led to the publication of a major policy document from the UN (1971), ‘Social Policy and Planning in National Development.’

The shift in focus of development strategy from growth centered to people centered has necessitated planning from grass root level involving all the stake holders in the process. “People must be at the centre of human development. Development has to be woven around people not people around development. David C Korten has articulated such concept of people’s involvement as “People Centered Development”. People are the primary subject matter in people centered development.”(Joel and Bhore, 2003).

Development is no longer a favour or a privilege to the people. It has to revolve around them. They cannot be treated as mute observer or objects or passive receivers as they are powerless and un-endowed. They are supposed to be prime movers of development at any given point of time. FAO, while emphasizing the role of people's participation in governance and development, has listed various ways by which people's participation can be strengthened.

- Participation by information - a unilateral means of providing information to people without seeking their response.
- Participation in information giving – people do not participate in process of decisions making but are encouraged to share their views.
- Consultation – People participate by being consulted – The programmes and plans are subject to modifications based on response and input from people. However, same is non-obligatory.
- Joint Planning – people participate in joint planning, analysis and formulations of new methods. Local groups control local decisions and hence have stake in maintaining structures and practices.
- Decision making - when consensus is acted upon through collective decision, this marks the initiatives of shared responsibilities for outcomes that may result.
- Empowerment - The ultimate objective of participation wherein the local Community has the right and capability to have a say in decision concerning their lives.

Peoples' Participation - Advantages

Participation in development is now being sought in world over, not because it is fad but because there has been a consensus on the usefulness of people's involvement in governance and development. This has several advantages like–

Efficiency: Participation can ensure effective utilization of available resources. The people and other agencies work towards achieving their objectives, involvement and cooperation among all stake holders improve efficiency and effectiveness of planning process.

Effectiveness: Failure of conventional growth strategy because of lack of grass root knowledge and absence of people's role in development made most of the plans ineffective. People's participation can make the development strategy more effective by granting a say in dividing the objectives and strategies and participation in management ensures effective utilization of resources.

Self Reliance: More often, it is noticed that people at local level look up to the external experts or Government for solutions to their problems. This leads to distortions and ineffectiveness of planning due to lack of local knowledge. If the local resources are utilized on the basis of decisions taken by the people themselves, the realization grows that many problems faced by the people have local solutions at their levels. With active involvement of the local people, it is possible not only to break the psychological barrier of dependence, but also to increase their awareness, self confidence and control of the development process.

In fact, the involvement in decision making, implementation and monitoring helps in developing local human resources.

Coverage: People's participation in decision making process widens the coverage among all sections including deprived and weaker sections.

Sustainability: External interventions through government or other agencies lack potential for long term sustainability of schemes if local participation is not ensured. People's involvement in governing the scheme creates local capability and ownership of resources. It is a sustainable development alternative for long term solutions to local problems.

Activity 1

Talk with several of your extension colleagues and ask them to define what they mean by Participation. Compare those definitions with the one given in this unit.

1.3.1 People's Participation in Indian Governance

India has had a long history of local governance. The concept of village as a self sufficient unit and existence of Panchayats at village level have existed since ancient times. Panchayats were institutions of local people for governance and resolutions of disputes at local level. Despite having no codified laws for functioning of Panchayats, they existed as potent institutions to maintain law and order, stability and utilization of local resources for common good of the community. Panchayats were democratic means of involving people in decision making, using local resources and talent to manage all affairs of the society. Panchayats were least dependent on external agencies and were the best examples of local governance through democratic participation.

In the modern India, the concept of participatory development had been experimented much before it took shape in the development discourse. The first such attempt of structural participation of people in development was through Community Development Programme in 1952 as a Programme of aided self help. This Programme intended to be planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, government offering technical and financial assistance. The community development Programme failed miserably because of lack of political patronage as well as bureaucratic lethargy. The country in its endeavor to fast track growth, focused on growth centered approach through centralized planning. There was no political priority to decentralize the governance system. This happened despite the fact that the Constitution of India had recognized Panchayat bodies as units of Self Government drawing its inspiration from the historical legacy of Panchayat Systems of Indian villages.

The importance of people's role in overall development framework was well enshrined in the Indian Constitution although in the Directives Principles of state Policy. Article 40 of the Constitution reads as "Organization of village Panchayats: The State shall take steps to organize Village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of Self Government." However, the non-obligatory nature of its reference in the Constitution resulted into complete exclusion of Panchayat System from policy priority. From independence up to 73rd and 74th

amendment to the Constitution of India several efforts were made towards decentralization emphasizing the role of participatory governance at grass root level. Some of the salient steps were:

- **Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957):** this Committee was set up to study the problems and suggest ways and means for implementing the scheme of Panchayati Raj on some uniform line throughout the country.
- **Ashok Mehta Committee (1977):** to suggest measures to revitalize *panchayati raj* institutions (PRIs).
- **C.H.Hanumantha Rao Committee (1984):** to suggest the methodology for district level planning.
- **G.V.K.Rao Committee (1985):** to study the administrative arrangements for rural development programmes and poverty alleviations schemes.
- **Sanghvi Committee (1987):** to examine the functioning of PRIs, recommended reorganizations of villages for creating viable Gram Panchayats.
- **64th Constitutional Amendment Bill (1989):** to set up *panchayats* in every state, but could not be passed in Rajya Sabha.
- **73rd Constitutional Amendment(1992):** A Constitutional obligation to set up Panchayats in states, hold elections with provisions for reservations and devolve powers, administrative and financial to Panchayati Raj Institutions for grass root participation of people in planning and development process.

Since independence, India has experimented with its policies partially on the lines of its own history and partially going by the global trends of the times. The periods of 1950s-1980s were periods of Centralized governance systems even internationally with growth Centered top down approach to development. India while giving token value to its own history in self governance, borrowed the concept of centralized planning with top down approach. GDP growth was the prime mover of the policy presuming it will take care of redistributive part.

The international failure of growth centered approach excluding the masses was almost replicated in India also. India had multi dimensional issues to address on development front like poverty, hunger, illiteracy, extreme inequalities, and rural urban divide. Fortunately, the importance of all round development with active people's participation was realized sooner than later. The emphasis shifted from 'top down' to 'bottom up approach' meaning thereby transfer of planning, decision making and delegations of administrative authority from the Central and State Government to Local Administration units of Government. "It was increasingly realized that democracy could play an important role in promoting development, eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life, which makes strengthening of local democracy an end to itself. Thus efforts to institutionalize the participation of citizens in decision making, development planning and management by giving more powers and resources to the grass root level was aimed to be brought about by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts(1993). These Constitutional Amendments, the 73rd pertaining to rural local government and 74th for urban local government have given a shot in the areas of decentralization."

These actions fully guarantee the vital role of people in harnessing their own talents and govern their own resources for their own development, State or any external agency being a nominal facilitator in the process. The 73rd Amendment, which is a watershed in the sphere of rural governance has an attached Eleventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution which covers 29 functional areas ranging from agriculture, land reforms, forestry, small industries, drinking water, rural electrification poverty alleviation, education, development of women and children etc. Local Government, be it rural or urban, is essentially a manifestation of popular participation in the process of governance at the grass root level.

All political power in democracy stems from people. Access to political power is critical for economic and social empowerment. Central, therefore, to governance is empowerment of people by increasing their control over governance. Till the 73rd Amendment there were few structural Institutions of governance at local level. People were largely excluded from the development process. A policy shift towards decentralization of political power took place in India through the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India. This was an outcome of growing concern about increasing inefficiency and costs of delivery systems of development programme.

After reading and understanding the concept of participation, its importance and relevance in Indian context, now attempt these question given in check your progress-1.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What do you understand by Participation? Explain why it is important for development.

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- 2) Is the concept of self sufficient village of ancient India an ideal example of people's participation in their affairs?

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1.4 GRAM SABHA AND PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

Right from the Gandhian Economics of the grass roots and Schumacher's 'Small is beautiful' much has been written and said about taking economic development to the rural areas and with it the smallest unit of the Indian democratic set up, the village." The dream of such visionaries was realized in modern India through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitutions which provided for creation of three-tier structure of Panchayats. The creation of this system was made constitutional obligations on all states leaving no discretion with them. Thus democracy began to flow from lowest level of society and development became people centric.

The setting up of Gram Sabha at village level has strengthened the people's direct involvement in their affairs. The Gram Sabha has been set up in each Village consisting of all members of the village who are eligible to vote in Elections. Gram Sabha take complete control of all the developmental issues of village and has a binding duty to discuss them in meetings to obtain consensus of its members. Gram Sabha has been recognized as the basic tier of Panchayati Raj. According to Article 243(b) a Gram Sabha consists of all persons registered as voters in the electoral roll.

Composition of Gram Sabha

- There will be at least two meetings of Gram Sabha every year, one in the first and the other in the last quarter of the financial year.
- Gram Sabha can also meet on the written request of one tenth of its members, or if required by Panchayat Samithi, Zila Parishad or the State Government.
- Participation of people in meeting is ensured by Panchayat by placing before the Gram Sabha - (in first quarter)
 - 1) Annual Statement of Accounts
 - 2) Report on the Administration of the preceding financial year
 - 3) The development and other programmes proposed for the financial year
 - 4) Last Audit Report -

In the meeting held in last quarter of the year following issues are discussed.

- a) Statement of Expenditure incurred during the year
- b) Physical and Financial programmes taken during the year.
- c) Proposals for any changes in the Programme
- d) Budget of the Panchayat and tax proposals of the Panchayat.

Besides above any other matter referred by Panchayat, Panchayat Samithi, Zila Parishad, the State Government is also taken up by Gram Sabha.

Quorum: The quorum for a meeting of the Gram Sabha shall be one tenth of the total members out of which at least 40 per cent should be women.

Presiding Officer: The meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be convened and presided by the Sarpanch of the Panchayat or, in his absence, by the Upsarpanch of such Panchayat.

Functions of Gram Sabha:

- To consider and approve the annual plan prepared by the Gram Panchayat.
- To generate proposal and determine the priority of all schemes and development programmes.
- To identify and select individuals for beneficiary oriented programmes.
- To disseminate information on development and welfare schemes
- To assist Gram Panchayat in collection and compilation of details about the village for development plans.
- To collect information about functioning of Gram Panchayat and share in Gram Sabha.
- To generate awareness among people about programmes and schemes for development.

In addition to above Gram Sabha discharges almost all functions which are required in the village for the development including persuading members to pay taxes and loan repayment.

Constraints:

- Lack of awareness, lack of attendance, domination, force caste.
- Lack of awareness about legal provisions of Gram Sabha, Panchayat.
- Poor not confident that their issues are taken up.

The above structure of Gram Sabha incorporates all members of the community. The decisions are collective in nature and rely on utilization of resources for the benefit of the society. Meetings of the Gram Sabha are convened to ensure the development of the people through their participation and mutual cooperation. The attendance ratio of people in Gram Sabha meetings is the best indicator of peoples' participation in planning and development.

To make participation in Gram Sabha effective there is need to take following positive action:

- Creation of objective conditions in the society
- Democracy cannot succeed with inequality and poverty.
- Effective role of political parties in educating and mobilizing people for Gram Sabha
- Panchayat leadership to be more democratic and open to criticism
- Freedom of speech to be ensured
- Information dissemination of positive works of Gram Sabha and Panchayat to be highlighted.
- Govt agencies to be responsive to people.

- Advice and decisions of the Gram sabha to be binding on the Gram Panchayat.
- State to ensure penal action for not holding Gram Sabha meetings.
- Motivate members for meaningful participation and effective role in Gram Sabha.

Activity 2

Visit a Village near your residence and attend one Gram Sabha meeting and note down the discussions in the meeting. Compare them with what is explained in this unit.

1.5 WARD SABHA AND PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, provided for creation of Urban Local Bodies for wider participation of people in development of urban areas. The background for this was weak and ineffective local bodies due to failure to hold regular elections, prolonged supersession and inadequate devolutions of powers and functions. Urban Local Bodies were not acting as vibrant democratic institutions of self governance with active peoples' participation.

The Constitutional Amendment created viable municipal bodies in urban areas which represented the people of the municipality. Municipalities were to have wards within their territorial jurisdictions. However, the Ward Committees and Municipalities did not develop into the institutions of people's participation.

Urban decentralisation has not matured to the extent it is done in rural areas. Our cities and towns do not have bottom up structures that create more proximity between the citizen and their urban local government. People's participation is at the heart of democracy. The absence of people has several adverse consequences on the functioning and accountability of those managing these institutions.

1.5.1 Ward Sabha in Panchayati Structure

The Ward Sabha in Gram Panchayat have been more effective instruments of airing popular views and opinion at decision making level.

Composition of Ward Sabha

The Ward Sabha comprises of all adult persons of the ward in the *panchayat* circle. The members of the ward elected through direct election, a *panch* as head of the ward who represents the people of the ward in all Gram *panchayat* meetings.

Quorum

The quorum for the meeting of a ward sabha shall not be less than one tenth of the total members in the *ward sabha* or twenty members whichever is less. To ensure wider participation of all sections of the society, not less than thirty percent of the voters attending the *ward sabha* shall be women. The persons belonging to SC/ ST shall be represented in proportion of their population in the *ward sabha*.

Functions and powers of Ward Sabha

- To generate proposals and determine the priority of schemes and development programs in the area of ward sabha and forward the same to the Gram Sabha or Gram Panchayat for inclusion in the development plan.
- To identify eligible persons for beneficiary oriented schemes.
- To verify the eligibility of persons getting various welfare assistance from Government.
- To collect information about services, plans and decisions taken in Gram Panchayat concerning the ward.
- To mobilise voluntary action for public goods and services.
- To ensure that members of Ward Sabha pay taxes and repay loans.
- To suggest location of public services like street light, toilets, public wells etc.
- To impart awareness on matters of public interest such as environment, sanitation, pollution.

Ward Sabha also takes up any other issue which concerns the members of the ward and raises it at Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat level for resolving the problems. Ward Sabha has been effective channel for people to directly participate in managing their development needs.

Meetings of Ward Sabha

Subject to orders of the Government ward sabha meets at least once in six month.

Limitations

Ward Sabha is a viable mechanism for active participation of all section of people at the very root of the society. However, there are limitations which can thwart people's role in governance

- Lack of education among majority in rural areas.
- Lack of awareness among weaker sections.
- Lack of knowledge among panchs and Sarpanchs about provisions of ward sabha.
- Domination of rich and elite in decision making.
- Exclusion of women and other weaker sections from ward sabha meetings.

Activity 3

Select some adult members in your locality and ask them about their perception of Ward Sabha. Also ask some Ward representatives and question them on Ward Sabha meeting. Note down the difficulties involved in direct questioning.

1.6 INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

The right to participate in linked to rights of inclusion and to rights to obligations, through which poor people may expect to hold governments more accountable

and responsive. It is essential that civil society and government must work together to make sure that participatory local governance programmes are inclusive and equitable in order to correct power imbalances that exist at local level. For inclusive governance the existence of diversity and differences has to be recognised. The salient features of inclusive participation are-

- Team work and collaboration.
- Individual and group activity.
- Action and ownership.
- Reflection and learning.

It has been observed that due to wide disparities in economic, social and political status of people in India, many individuals or sometimes the whole section are excluded from development because of their gender, ethnicity, disability or poverty. The effect of such exclusion is huge deepening the already existing inequalities.

Development must encompass the whole spectrum of the society so that all stakeholders in the outcome of development have participation and say in the process. Gram Sabha, Panchayat institutions are instruments for inclusive participation if their potential is properly harnessed. These institutions have inbuilt mechanism to include all sections of society in all decision making and development process. It ensures optimum utilisation of local resources including human resources for capacity building of local population. The legal provisions of Panchayat act ensure compulsory participation of women, SC/ST and other weaker sections. Inclusive participation is at the centre of achieving equitable development where in the fruits of the process of development are consumed at all levels. The mere inclusion of all ensures its correct path and optimization of resources. The effect of not harnessing the great potential of women as human resource has been felt all around.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has led to true empowerment of people at grass root level by giving equal opportunity to all in development.
Comment.

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- 2) How Gram Sabha controls the resource utilisation in its geographical jurisdiction? Is it a true representative of all sections of society?

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- 3) Decentralisation of governance is better than centralized governance in a developing country. Explain the merits and demerits of the statement.

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the meaning and concept of participation. The significance of participation in development policy was examined with reference to international experiences and in Indian context. We examined various ways of involving people in development process and disadvantages of non participation in the process. We had a look at experience of Decentralised governance in India since Independence and background which paved the way for enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1992. Later we studied the structure of Panchayati Raj in rural areas and examined in some detail about the role and functions of Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha in formalising the local self governance in India. The importance of Inclusive Participation was briefly highlighted in the last section of the unit.

1.8 KEYWORDS

Participation: Taking part in an activity which impacts the individual itself or his community.

Sustainability: Used with reference to development for planning and schemes which create capacity for long term self survival and not meant for short term objective.

Panchayati Raj Institution: A three tier structure of local self governance as part of policy of Decentralised governance. A constitutional obligation for Indian States to establish the Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural areas.

Gram Sabha: A general assembly of all members of a Village who are enrolled as voters in electoral roll. Meets at least twice a year to discuss development issues of village.

Sarpanch: The head of the Gram Panchayat directly elected by the electorates in a Gram Panchayat.

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1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What do you understand by Participation? Explain why it is important for development.

Answer: Participation literally means taking part in some activity. By taking part in an activity an individual or group can exert its opinion and views based on the first hand information about any place, environment or any enabling condition that may be essential for successful implementation of a scheme or policy. In development sphere, it is important to know the local know how to correctly devise and plan schemes compatible with local conditions. Hence, participation is extremely essential in development field to collect local information by involving local people at all stages.

- 2) Is the concept of self sufficient village of ancient India an ideal example of people's participation in their affairs?

Answer: India has had a long history of self governing village societies through Panchayat institutions. The relative isolation of villages in India in ancient times made it almost compulsive for people to learn to govern themselves. The Panchayats had the sanction of the society to engage into not only development issues but many a times they were called upon for maintenance of law and order, discharge judicial functions and resolution of disputes in its territory. They worked as perfect institutions of governance at that time but in today's modern times it may not be feasible to expand their sphere beyond development issues since there are other structures to take care of other functions on an all India level. Panchayats are potent institutions for development purposes even today as reflected in the success of Panchayati Raj in many places.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has led to true empowerment of people at grass root level by giving equal opportunity to all in development. Comment.

Answer: The 73rd Constitutional amendment has provided for local self governance and participation of all sections in the development process by giving reservations to weaker sections including women. The Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats are true representatives of people who have stake in the process of development. However the dynamics of rural society, polity and economy does play role in determining the functions of Panchayats at grass root level. For example on a reserved seat for women either the women of ruling elite get elected or women is by proxy represented by male of the family thus diluting the very concept of democratization.

- 2) How Gram Sabha controls the resource utilisation in its geographical jurisdiction? Is it a true representative of all sections of society?

Answer: Gram Sabha is the general assembly of people in a village which decide on all matters related to the village. The functions include decision on beneficiary of schemes, approval of development plans for the village, collection of information on all issues of development. The decisions taken in Gram Sabha are collective where all sections of society have equal representation.

- 3) Decentralisation of governance is better than centralized governance in a developing country. Explain the merits and demerits of the statement.

Answer: Decentralisation of governance is a better method of development since it involves participation of people in the very process itself rather than at the end of it when end result is given to people. In developing societies, there is need to involve people to ensure equitable distribution of development. The centralized planning approach followed world over failed to do justice to large majority widening the gap between elites and deprived. However decentralized planning needs to be followed with care as majority of people in developing countries are illiterate and unaware.



UNIT 2 PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND METHODS

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 What are Participatory Methods?
- 2.3 Why is Participatory Management Important?
- 2.4 Application of Participatory Methods
- 2.5 PLA: Underlying Principles and Techniques
- 2.6 Working with Stakeholders
- 2.7 Using Participatory Methods: Advantages, Challenges and Ways Forward
- 2.8 Relevant Terms Explained
- 2.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.10 References and Suggested Readings
- 2.11 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Participatory tools and methods are the means by which the principles of participation are translated into the actual practice of development. Participatory methods ensure that all stakeholders become involved in a number of different activities which are integral to the development process. They provide a structured approach to participation with clear guidelines of who should be involved, when and to what extent. They are very important to programme and project planning when clear procedures need to be identified and approved, rather than relying on an ad hoc approach. Participatory tools are specific activities designed to encourage joint analysis, learning and action. Special ‘packaged’ techniques can be very powerful ways of getting people involved. However, no one tool or technique is applicable to all situations.

A wide range of distinctive tools and methods have been developed over the last decade or two. This Unit provides a cross section of participatory methodologies. It is by no means a comprehensive list of all existing methodologies but is intended rather, to provide an example of the range of resources available to those who wish to expand participation at any level of their operations from the internal organizational level to the external programmes/projects supported. It should also be noted that none of these methods need be used exclusively; rather they can be used in combination. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses and different methods can be used for different purposes.

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain why participatory tools and methods are important in participatory process management;
- describe participatory tools and methods;
- appreciate the principles and techniques of participatory methods; and

- describe the attitudes and actions that are critical to applying participatory methodologies.

2.2 WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY METHODS?

Participatory methodologies aim to actively involve people and communities in identifying problems, formulating plans and implementing decisions.

They are often seen as a set of principles for generating insights about people and the communities in which they live. However, for those involved in using them, they are not only often flexible and informal, they are also continually evolving. In addition, there is no one standard methodology or set of methods to employ in any given situation: different techniques therefore need to be developed for particular situations.

Participatory methodologies enable people to do their own investigations, analyses, presentations, planning and action, and to own the outcome. The principles behind participatory methodologies are:

- That it is possible, and desirable, to increase participation in development by involving those immediately affected by a particular need;
- Involving people so affected enables activity designers and managers to explore a range of real circumstances and systems rather than concentrating on statistical samples;
- Issues can be investigated from different perspectives and using a range of approaches, such as involving multidisciplinary teams;
- Informal approaches are often more appropriate and can be changed as the work progresses.

Participatory methods are most commonly associated with the spread of diagramming and visual techniques which began to be developed in the 1970s. These originated in a number of scientific disciplines interested in analysis of complex systems: biological science, ecology, agricultural economics and geography. It became increasingly important to work with farmers to develop more sophisticated models to explain their responses to development programmes. The increasing influence of applied anthropology in development agencies from the 1980s also led to greater awareness of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, social processes and grassroots perspectives on development. The end of the 1980s diagramming techniques had combined bringing together the insights from these different disciplines into a flexible methodology commonly referred to as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). By the mid 1990s it was becoming increasingly evident that the mechanical application of these techniques was often failing to really reach and capture the views of poor people, particularly women, children and socially excluded. There was renewed interest in methodologies for participation, drawing on earlier traditions of participatory action research which had been long established as an integral part of many grassroots organizations.

Participatory methods are therefore a diverse and flexible set of techniques for visual representation and stakeholder involvement characterized by a set of

underlying ethical principles. There is no one set of techniques to be mechanically applied in all contexts for all participants. There is on the one hand a set of visual tools to be flexibly applied to assist the synthesis and analysis of information which can be used in group settings and also as part of individual interviews. On the other hand are a set of guidelines for facilitating participation and negotiation in focus group discussions and workshops bringing together different stakeholders. These may or may not make substantial use of visual techniques. Generally both visual techniques and participatory facilitation are combined in different ways. The emphasis is on innovation and creativity in adapting previous practice to new contexts and needs.

Participatory methods have a useful contribution to make in analysis of the findings of impact assessment. They provide a useful means of investigating and crosschecking information gained by quantitative and qualitative methods at appropriate stages during the assessment. At the same time information obtained through participatory methods should also be cross-checked through triangulation with other methods to test their validity and increase their credibility.

Participatory methods have an important contribution in the systematic identification of realistic ways forward based on the information obtained from the impact assessment. As noted above, diagramming techniques are frequently used in management consultancy for this purpose. In addition the participatory process facilitates communication between donors, policymakers, development practitioners and those affected by interventions. The different stakeholders therefore both have their own opportunity to present their views and recommendations, and also to comment on those presented by other stakeholders.

This participatory process needs to be carefully facilitated in order not to raise unrealistic expectations or create tensions which cannot be resolved. It is crucial that the potential limitations on change are clear to all those concerned, particularly in relation to resources available and the skills of development agencies. It is also important again to ensure fair representation of different stakeholders through the detail of focus group and workshop design.

A particularly important contribution of participatory methods is their role in capacity building of the different stakeholders. Where sufficient attention is paid to these participatory methods have the potential to build up the necessary information resources and networks for a learning process which will be sustainable beyond the term of the one particular impact assessment. This can include:

- Group-level learning
- Ongoing participatory monitoring and evaluation
- Multi-stakeholder networks for policy assessment

Thus the costs of integrating participatory methods can be seen as a contribution to development in themselves, leading to much longer term benefits. These benefits have included reducing the costs of project administration, reducing default in micro-finance programmes, making training programmes more attractive to clients prepared to pay for services. This is therefore also a contribution to longer term financial sustainability of interventions.

Participatory methods have an important contribution to make at all stages of an impact assessment:

- Initial identification of impact goals, indicators, categories for sampling and analysis and initial exploration of hypotheses
- During the impact assessment process for crosschecking and further exploration of issues raised by other methods
- Towards the end of the assessment to systematically identify and test the possible implications of any recommendations for improvement in projects or policy with different stakeholders

2.3 WHY IS PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Participatory management will not arise spontaneously: it is a conscious and informed activity to be advocated and implemented at every stage of the activity cycle. And it is important that senior staff recognize participatory management as necessary to the success of any development activity or intervention: senior staff are key because they act as powerful role models for other staff; and the practices they espouse should filter through to influence the way whole teams of staff interact with their partners.

The process of continued, active stakeholder involvement in an activity results in various improvements.

- **Sustainability and sustainable impact:**
More people are committed to carrying on the activity after outside support has stopped;
Active participation helps develop skills and confidence.
- **Effectiveness:**
There is a greater sense of ownership and agreement of the processes to achieve an objective.
- **Responsiveness:**
Effort and inputs are more likely to be targeted at perceived needs so that outputs are used appropriately.
- **Efficiency:**
Inputs and activities are more likely to result in outputs on time, of good quality and within budget if local knowledge and skills are tapped into and mistakes are avoided.
- **Transparency and accountability:**
This accrues as more and more stakeholders are given information and decision making power.
- **Equity:**
This is likely to result if all the stakeholders needs, interests and abilities are taken into account.

2.4 APPLICATION OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Participatory methodologies can be used at any stage of the Activity Cycle:

- At the Design stage, by involving people in identifying problems during the planning and designing stage, e.g. needs assessments, feasibility studies;
- At the Implementation stage, through examination of a particular problem or topic e.g. identifying priorities, or implementing new activities where information
- needs to be collected;
- At the Monitoring and Evaluation stage, by enabling participants to implement procedures to examine their own activities.

The precise information requirements of the different stages are diverse. However they all depend on the systematic collection of data about the households and communities served by the activity and the environments in which they live and work.

Three of the more common methodologies are:

- 1) Participatory Learning and Action;
- 2) Participatory Rapid Appraisal;
- 3) Participatory Action Research.

See Box 1 (overleaf) for more information on these.

Box 1: Common Participatory Methodologies

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

An approach, which seeks to enable those with smaller, less dominant voices, to be heard and to take control over decisions, which affect their lives. PLA is a process of **LEARNING from, with and by the community**; of using a **set of tools, methods, techniques and exercises to UNDERSTAND** the needs, problems, and concerns of people. Participatory Learning and Action combines:

- a set of diagramming and visual techniques originally developed for livelihoods analysis;
- underlying grassroots participation principles of human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral approach to engaging communities in development through interactive and participatory processes. PRA builds upon the techniques of **Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)** pioneered to involve communities in their own needs

assessment, problem identification and ranking, strategy for implementation, and community action plan. It uses a wide range of tool, often within a focus group discussion format, to elicit spatial, time related and social or institutional data.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) involves three key elements: research, education and socio-political action. It is an experiential methodology for the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes — the grassroots — and for their authentic organizations and movements. Its purpose is to enable oppressed groups and classes to acquire sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects, acts struggles to achieve the goals of social transformation.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) What are the principles behind participatory methodologies?

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2) Why are the different stages where participatory methodologies can be used?

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2.5 PLA: UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

A wide range of distinctive methods have been developed over the last decade or two. This chapter provides a cross section of participatory methodologies. It is by no means a comprehensive list of all existing methodologies but is intended rather, to provide an example of the range of resources available to those who wish to expand participation at any level of their operations from the internal

organizational level to the external programmes/projects supported. It should also be noted that none of these methods need be used exclusively; rather they can be used in combination. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses and different methods can be used for different purposes.

The participatory methods discussed here are now generically referred to as **Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)**. Participatory Learning and Action combines:

- **a set of diagramming and visual techniques** originally developed for livelihoods analysis and now widely used in Natural Resources departments in development agencies. They have since been adapted for use in other sectors including enterprise development.
- **underlying principles of grassroots participation** from human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

The underlying principles and most common techniques are summarized in Box 2.

Participatory methods for impact assessment are most commonly associated with the spread of **diagramming and visual techniques** which began to be developed in the 1970s. These originated in a number of scientific disciplines interested in analysis of complex systems: biological science, ecology, agricultural economics and geography. It became increasingly important to work with farmers to develop more sophisticated models to explain their responses to development programmes. The increasing influence of applied anthropology in development agencies from the 1980s also led to greater awareness of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, social processes and grassroots perspectives on development. By the end of the 1980s diagramming techniques bringing together the insights from these different disciplines had been combined into a flexible methodology commonly referred to as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Parallel to these developments in the South, methodologies like Soft Systems Analysis and Cognitive Mapping also became increasingly common in areas like management consultancy, organizational research and planning. Here diagrams were used for institutional analysis, highlighting problem areas and brainstorming possible solutions. Workshops for organizations and enterprises included senior executives and managers.

By the mid 1990s it was becoming increasingly evident that the mechanical application of these techniques was often failing to really reach and capture the views of poor people, particularly women, children and socially excluded. There was renewed interest in **methodologies for participation** drawing on earlier traditions of participatory action research which had been long established as an integral part of many grassroots organizations in the South. In India for example SEWA and other women's organizations based their programmes on the findings of focus group discussions in the 1970s and 1980s. MYRADA and AKRSP developed participatory methodologies for grassroots mobilization. In Latin America Paulo Freire developed methodologies for action research which were later adopted in other countries. These methodologies were based on underlying

principles of human rights and aimed to use the research process itself as a means of empowerment through use of diagrams as a focus for discussion and other methodologies like drawing and role-play. More recently these methodologies have been extended to include photography and video by grassroots groups and looking at ways in which grassroots groups can record their own information in diaries.

BOX 2: PLA : UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- **embracing complexity**
- **recognition of multiple realities**
- **prioritizing the realities of the poor and disadvantaged**
- **grassroots empowerment**
- **from assessment to sustainable learning**
- **relating learning to action**

TECHNIQUES

Visual Techniques

- **Diagrams:** Flow/causal diagram; Venn/Institutional diagram; Systems diagrams; Pie charts; Histograms
- **Ranking Techniques:** Preference ranking and scoring; Pair wise ranking; Direct matrix ranking; Ranking by voting; Wealth ranking
- **Time Trends Analysis:** Historical and future (visioning) mapping; Time trends charts; Oral Histories
- **Mapping Techniques:** Mobility mapping; Social mapping; Transect (walks)
- **Calendars:** Seasonal calendar; Historical seasonal calendar
- **Ethno-Classifications:** Proverbs, Stories, Indigenous Categories and Terms, Taxonomies

Group and team dynamics methods

- **Focus Group** discussions
- **Role-play**
- **Participatory workshops Recent Innovations**
- **Photo and Video** production with grassroots groups
- **Grassroots diaries** using diagrams and simple numerical and written information

OTHER COMPLEMENTARY QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- Secondary Data Review
- Structured questionnaires
- Semi-structured interviewing

- Case studies
- Participant observation
- Direct observation,
- Qualitative anthropological fieldwork

Initially the term PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) was used to describe the bringing together of RRA and activist research. It was emphasized that the most important aspect was not the diagramming tools but their flexible application based on a number of underlying principles:

- **Embracing complexity** and seeking to understand it rather than oversimplifying reality in accordance with predetermined categories and theories
- **Recognition of multiple realities** to be taken into account in analysis or action.
- **Prioritizing the realities of the poor and most disadvantaged** as equal partners in knowledge creation and problem analysis.
- **Grassroots empowerment**: aiming not only to gather information about impact, but to make the assessment process itself a contribution to empowerment through linking grassroots learning and networking into policy-making.

More recently the term Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) has become preferred because it more effectively incorporates the underlying human rights tradition through emphasizing the importance of:

- changing from **appraisal to learning** and hence moving away from the use of participatory methods as an extractive process by outsiders to a sustainable learning process involving different stakeholders as equal partners.
- the importance of **relating learning to action** incorporating programme and policy improvement as an integral part of the learning process.

Participatory methods are therefore a diverse and flexible set of techniques for visual representation and stakeholder involvement characterized by a set of underlying ethical principles. There is no one set of techniques to be mechanically applied in all contexts for all participants. There is on the one hand a set of visual tools to be flexibly applied to assist the synthesis and analysis of information which can be used in group settings and also as part of individual interviews. On the other hand are a set of guidelines for facilitating participation and negotiation in focus group discussions and workshops bringing together different stakeholders. These may or may not make substantial use of visual techniques. Generally both visual techniques and participatory facilitation are combined in different ways. The emphasis is on innovation and creativity in adapting previous practice to new contexts and needs.

2.6 WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Understanding the stakeholders, including their literacy levels, local languages, gender roles, indigenous management practices and work ethics, is one important

step. This information can be used to design logframe planning activities that are more appropriate to the local context and more conducive to local participation. A second, related step is to learn roughly equivalent terms in local languages for key logframe concepts (such as Goal, Purpose, Outputs, Assumptions). This often has to be done through discussions with local people.

Sometimes the terms need to be renegotiated in logframe workshops when there is more of a context for the discussion and a better understanding of key concepts. Each of the above require that the preparation for logframe planning workshops be thoughtful and rigorous, including ample time for stakeholder interviews in advance of the session and adequate time for designing and preparing specialized planning sessions that are responsive to local requirements.

For planning work with illiterate or semi-literate participants, the traditional (literacy-based) version of the logframe is inappropriate. In these groups, more literate and more articulate elites may dominate discussions, even with the assistance of an outside facilitator. In these situations local ownership of activity designs will not result and the disbenefits of using the logframe approach far outweigh its benefits.

Through adequate planning and preliminary stakeholder interviews, this kind of situation should be recognized well in advance of the arrival of a planning team. Where use of the logframe approach is not appropriate, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) planning methodologies will be more appropriate (Refs), because they rely more on images rather than words. If need be, the results of these planning methods may be eventually be married with the logframe, preferably through a planning process involving more articulate local representatives. If necessary, though this is less desirable, planning experts can synthesis PRA planning decisions into a logframe format.

In these kinds of planning settings, using the formal, literacy-based version of the logframe will created a bias against local participation. Again, more literate and articulate elites will tend to dominate the planning process. In these situations, the logframe approach can be used subtly with little explicit mention of its technical terms.

One planning process used in this situation combines consensus-based approaches for determining objectives that have more of a visual focus or an intuitive appeal. In using and blending these planning methods the visual focus and visioning provides a common basis for communication and building consensus and ownership amongst local groups.

2.7 USING PARTICIPATORY METHODS: ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

Participatory methods have the potential to bring together information from a diversity of sources more rapidly and cost effectively than quantitative or qualitative methods alone.

- Relevance of impact goals and indicators
- Stakeholder representation

- Reliability of understanding of development processes
- Credibility of practical inference

However participatory methods also face a number of inherent challenges which need to be taken into account. Some of these are common to all impact assessment methodologies; some are due to the visual tools and some to the participatory process. The degree to which participatory methods realise their potential contribution depends critically on how carefully they are used and in what context. Participatory methods are not a fixed set of mechanistic tools but a diverse range of possible techniques which need to be flexibly adapted to particular situations and needs. In some cases problems can be resolved through innovation in the methods themselves. Sometimes limitations can only be, others can only be addressed through triangulation with other quantitative and qualitative methods.

Using participatory methods provides a useful way of:

- Rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts through exploring the inter linkages between different dimensions of livelihoods and poverty
- Prioritizing the different possible impact goals for assessment by identifying which of the range of possible impacts are most important for the primary stakeholders e.g. increased income versus decreased leisure, levels of income and/or working conditions expected
- Identifying reliable measurable or qualitative indicators which can be used in different contexts or for different target groups.

These potential contributions of participatory methods also have their own challenges:

- Challenge of standardization for comparison because of the emphasis on locally identified impact goals and indicators there are added challenges for comparative assessment. It is however possible to agree on common impact goals to be applied across contexts and then weight locally specific indicators by which they are to be measured. This is merely an extension of the weighting procedure itself, which inevitably involves a certain amount of rather imprecise measurement and assumptions. The participatory process enables the rather arbitrary nature of *a priori* weighting to be based on local rather than external priorities.
- Challenge of sensitive information: it cannot be assumed that the participatory process will necessarily yield in-depth information on sensitive issues. In some cases the inevitably unpredictable nature of participation has enabled generally private issues like domestic violence or controversial issues like caste discrimination to be raised. Including techniques like role-play has been found useful in highlighting dimensions of power relations. In other contexts this sort of sensitive information may require in-depth investigation by qualitative methods.

The participatory process also has a number of inherent challenges which include:

- Emphasis on consensus may serve to privilege dominant views and further marginalize the most disadvantaged through giving the appearance of participation. Explicit attempts are likely to be needed to include the very poor, women and socially excluded and also to ensure that they are not

only present, but their voices are heard. This requires careful attention to the participatory process: who participates which may require particular attention to location and timing, how they participate which may require separate meetings or special allocation of time to particular participants.

- The differences and also potential conflicts of interest may be difficult to resolve and may require careful skills of negotiation. Recognizing and addressing these differences and potential conflicts is nevertheless still essential to ensuring that the impact assessment is a reliable representation of contribution to poverty reduction.

Participatory methods have the potential to bring together information from a diversity of sources more rapidly and cost effectively than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. As indicated in Box 2 they have a number of potential key contributions in increasing:

- **Relevance of impact goals and indicators**
- **Stakeholder representation**
- **Reliability of understanding of development processes**
- **Credibility of practical inference**

Although there are inherent challenges faced by the use of participatory methods, these are no greater than for quantitative or qualitative methods. Much of the problem with participatory research in the past has been because of under resourcing, leading to mechanical use of tools by people with insufficient experience or understanding of context. Participatory methods cannot be seen as a cheap option. People with the skill and experience to flexibly adapt the different techniques to the particular issues, contexts and institutions being assessed, must treat them as a serious and integral part of impact assessment requiring management. In many contexts a skilled facilitator would be able to train programme staff, local investigators and/or grassroots leaders to replicate selected simple exercises to extend the scope and coverage of the participatory investigation. This is particularly the case for longer-term impact assessments and/or where at least some local people already have experience of participatory methods as co-facilitators or participants. Skilled participatory facilitators would also be able to identify any limitations in the information obtained and indicate ways in which the information obtained through participatory methods can best be triangulated with other quantitative and qualitative methods.

Box 2: Participatory Methods: Advantages, Challenges And Ways Forward

	Advantages	Challenges	Ways for
Relevance of impact goals and indicators	• rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts • participatory prioritisation of different impact goals • identification of locally relevant indicators	• standardization of impact goals and indicators to allow comparative assessment • ensuring that sensitive issues are aired	• using the same impact goals, weighting locally-specific indicators • role play and/or triangulation with qualitative methods

Representation of different stakeholders	- identifying relevant stakeholder categories for assessment, control groups and analysis - involving different stakeholders in a participatory process, including the most vulnerable	- the focus on consensus may mask differences - ensuring that the most vulnerable are present and their voices are heard - resolving differences between stakeholders	- paying attention to participatory process: location, timing, composition of discussion groups and discussion agenda - triangulation with quantitative survey or informal qualitative targeted interviews
Reliability of findings	- rapidly obtaining impact and other information for whole communities or groups - exploring processes and hypotheses - rapidly investigating underlying or side issues	- scale and representation beyond physically identifiable communities - focus on diagram outputs may detract from analysis of processes	- using quantitative PLA methods eg mapping and voting - careful documentation of context and the assessment process - triangulation with other methods
Credibility of practical inference	- increases communication between donors, policymakers, development practitioners and those affected by interventions - makes information immediately accessible to different stakeholders	- may raise unrealistic expectations - may create tensions which cannot be resolved	- attention to identifying and clarifying the limitations of the programmes and policies - careful attention to the participatory process

2.7.1 The Role of a Facilitator

- Help the participants to organise more quickly and effectively.
- To create a conducive environment where participants can be comfortable with one another.
- Guide the participants through a process of learning.
- Encourage the participants to become involved in the training program.
- Help the sub groups to establish proper roles and responsibility.
- Help the participants in setting up agenda and develop an attitude among them that it is in their best interests.

- Ensure that both the participants and the facilitator(s) are honest, open in their behaviour and actions.
- To provide a process, which will help the participants to discuss their own content in the most satisfactory and productive way possible.
- Facilitator is positive about the content of the training and has equal stake in the decisions that are taken by them.
- Facilitator may face many challenges with the participants but ultimately the participants must solve it on their own.

2.7.2 Facilitation Skills

Adapting: to the changing conditions, allowing freedom to change the mind and adjust to suit the particular needs of the moment.

Communicating: thoughts, feelings and ideas about the happenings. Enables to contribute and share; also helps to develop a sense of freedom to act in appropriate way.

Listening: in an open and quiet way. Helps to understand what and how it is happening. and gives basis for the choices to act.

Questioning: in an enquiring and learning way. Gain knowledge to make choices.

Reviewing: what is happening here and how. Helps to assess what changes your action has had on what is happening.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) What do you understand by participatory learning action?

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2) What are the advantages of participatory methods?

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2.8 RELEVANT TERMS EXPLAINED

- ***Access to resources***

A series of participatory exercises that allows development practitioners to collect information and raises awareness among beneficiaries about the ways in which access to resources varies according to gender and other important social variables. This userfriendly tool draws on the everyday experience of participants and is useful to men, women, trainers, project staff, and field-workers.

- ***Analysis of tasks***

A gender analysis tool that raises community awareness about the distribution of domestic, market, and community activities according to gender and familiarizes planners with the degree of role flexibility that is associated with different tasks. Such information and awareness is necessary to prepare and execute development interventions that will benefit both men and women.

- ***Focus group meetings***

Relatively low cost, semi-structured, small group (four to twelve participants plus a facilitator) consultations used to explore peoples' attitudes, feelings, or preferences, and to build consensus. Focus group work is a compromise between participant observation, which is less controlled, lengthier, and more in depth, and preset interviews, which are not likely to attend to participants' own concerns.

- ***Force field analysis***

A tool similar to one called "Story With a Gap," which engages people to define and classify goals and to make sustainable plans by working on thorough "before and after" scenarios. Participants review the causes of problematic situations, consider the factors that influence the situation, think about solutions, and create alternative plans to achieve solutions. The tools are based on diagrams or pictures, which minimize language and literacy differences and encourage creative thinking.

- ***Logical Framework or LogFRAME***

A matrix that illustrates a summary of project design, emphasizing the results that are expected when a project is successfully completed. These results or outputs are presented in terms of objectively verifiable indicators. The Logical Framework approach to project planning, developed under that name by the U.S. Agency for International Development, has been adapted for use in participatory methods such as ZOPP (in which the tool is called a *project planning matrix*) and Team UP.

- ***Mapping***

A generic term for gathering in pictorial form baseline data on a variety of indicators. This is an excellent starting point for participatory work because it gets people involved in creating a visual output that can be used immediately to bridge verbal communication gaps and to generate lively discussion. Maps are useful as verification of secondary source information, as training and awareness raising tools, for comparison, and for monitoring of change.

Common types of maps include *health maps*, *institutional maps* (*Venn diagrams*), and *resource maps*.

- ***Needs assessment***

A tool that draws out information about people's varied needs, raises participants' awareness of related issues, and provides a framework for prioritizing needs. This sort of tool is an integral part of gender analysis to develop an understanding of the particular needs of both men and women and to do comparative analysis.

- ***Participation***

Participation refers to involvement whereby local populations in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Participation requires recognition and use of local capacities and avoids the imposition of priorities from the outside

- ***Participatory development***

An approach to "development" that empowers individuals and communities to define and analyze their own problems, make their own decisions about directions and strategies for action, and lead in those actions. The approach is contrasted with "top-down" development processes, in which outsiders, with greater socioeconomic and political power, make the key decisions about local resource use and management.

- ***Participant observation***

A fieldwork technique used by anthropologists and sociologists to collect qualitative and quantitative data that leads to an in depth understanding of peoples' practices, motivations, and attitudes. Participant observation entails investigating the project background, studying the general characteristics of a beneficiary population, and living for an extended period among beneficiaries, during which interviews, observations, and analyses are recorded and discussed.

- ***Preference ranking***

Also called direct matrix ranking, an exercise in which people identify what they do and do not value about a class of objects (for example, tree species or cooking fuel types). Ranking allows participants to understand the reasons for local preferences and to see how values differ among local groups. Understanding preferences is critical for choosing appropriate and effective interventions.

- ***Public participation***

A process that consists of a series of activities and actions conducted by a sponsoring agency or other entity to both inform the public and obtain input from them. Public participation affords stakeholders the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. Other terms for public participation include public involvement and public engagement.

- ***Role playing***

Enables people to creatively remove themselves from their usual roles and

perspectives to allow them to understand choices and decisions made by other people with other responsibilities. Ranging from a simple story with only a few characters to an elaborate street theater production, this tool can be used to acclimate a research team to a project setting, train trainers, and encourage community discussions about a particular development intervention.

- ***Seasonal diagrams or seasonal calendars***

Show the major changes that affect a household, community, or region within a year, such as those associated with climate, crops, labor availability and demand, livestock, prices, and so on. Such diagrams highlight the times of constraints and opportunity, which can be critical information for planning and implementation.

- ***Secondary data review***

Also called desk review, an inexpensive, initial inquiry that provides necessary contextual background. Sources include academic theses and dissertations, annual reports, archival materials, census data, life histories, maps, project documents, and so on.

- ***Semi-structured interviews***

Also called *conversational interviews*, interviews that are partially structured by a flexible interview guide with a limited number of preset questions. This kind of guide ensures that the interview remains focused on the development issue at hand while allowing enough conversation so that participants can introduce and discuss topics that are relevant to them. These tools are a deliberate departure from survey-type interviews with lengthy, predetermined questionnaires.

- ***Socio-cultural profiles***

Detailed descriptions of the social and cultural dimensions that in combination with technical, economic, and environmental dimensions serve as a basis for design and preparation of policy and project work. Profiles include data about the type of communities, demographic characteristics, economy and livelihood, land tenure and natural resource control, social organization, factors affecting access to power and resources, conflict resolution mechanisms, and values and perceptions. Together with a participation plan, the socio-cultural profile helps ensure that proposed projects and policies are culturally and socially appropriate and potentially sustainable.

- ***Surveys***

A sequence of focused, predetermined questions in a fixed order, often with predetermined, limited options for responses. Surveys can add value when they are used to identify development problems or objectives, narrow the focus or clarify the objectives of a project or policy, plan strategies for implementation, and monitor or evaluate participation. Among the survey instruments used in Bank work are *firm surveys*, *sentinel community surveillance*, *contingent valuation*, and *priority surveys*.

- ***Tree diagrams***

Multipurpose, visual tools for narrowing and prioritizing problems, objectives, or decisions. Information is organized into a treelike diagram that includes information on the main issue, relevant factors, and influences and outcomes of these factors. Tree diagrams are used to guide design and evaluation systems, to uncover and analyze the underlying causes of a particular problem, or to rank and measure objectives in relation to one another.

- ***Village meetings***

Meetings with many uses in participatory development, including information sharing and group consultation, consensus building, prioritization and sequencing of interventions, and collaborative monitoring and evaluation. When multiple tools such as resource mapping, ranking, and focus groups have been used, village meetings are important venues for launching activities, evaluating progress, and gaining feedback on analysis.

- ***Wealth ranking***

Also known as wellbeing ranking or vulnerability analysis, a technique for the rapid collection and analysis of specific data on social stratification at the community level. This visual tool minimizes literacy and language differences of participants as they consider factors such as ownership of or use rights to productive assets, lifecycle stage of members of the productive unit, relationship of the productive unit to locally powerful people, availability of labor, and indebtedness.

- ***Workshops***

Structured group meetings at which a variety of key stakeholder groups, whose activities or influence affect a development issue or project, share knowledge and work toward a common vision. With the help of a workshop facilitator, participants undertake a series of activities designed to help them progress toward the development objective (consensus building, information sharing, prioritization of objectives, team building, and so on). In project as well as policy work, from preplanning to evaluation stages, stakeholder workshops are used to initiate, establish, and sustain collaboration.

- ***Stakeholders***

Stakeholders are any individual, group or institution, which could be involved in the transfer of knowledge and best practice to improve the urban development process, can be considered a stakeholder.

2.9 LET US SUM UP

Development practitioners use a wide variety of different methods, tailored to different tasks and situations, to support participatory development. Each of the methods described above is a combination of tools, held together by a guiding principle. Dozens of exercises exist to cultivate collaborative development planning and action. These are the tools with which social scientists and other development practitioners encourage and enable stakeholder participation. Some tools are designed to inspire creative solutions; others are used for investigative

or analytic purposes. One tool might be useful for sharing or collecting information, whereas another is an activity for transferring that information into plans or actions

It would be misleading to claim that any tools or methods are inherently participatory or that they spontaneously encourage ownership and innovation among stakeholders. The participants in development planning and action—the users of these methods and tools—must be the ones who encourage and enable participation. The tools themselves facilitate learning, preparation, and creative application of knowledge. They make it easier for Task Managers and borrowers who are committed to participation to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders in the selection, design, and implementation of development projects. These same methods, however, can also be implemented in a “top-down” manner, which merely pays lip service to participation. The ultimate responsibility for using these methods well, therefore, rests with the users and facilitators.

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2.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The principles behind participatory methodologies are:
 - That it is possible, and desirable, to increase participation in development by involving those immediately affected by a particular need;
 - Involving people so affected enables activity designers and managers to explore a range of real circumstances and systems rather than concentrating on statistical samples;
 - Issues can be investigated from different perspectives and using a range of approaches, such as involving multidisciplinary teams;
 - Informal approaches are often more appropriate and can be changed as the work progresses.
- 2) Participatory methodologies can be used at any stage of the Activity Cycle:
 - At the Design stage, by involving people in identifying problems during the planning and designing stage, e.g. needs assessments, feasibility studies;
 - At the Implementation stage, through examination of a particular problem or topic e.g. identifying priorities, or implementing new activities where information
 - needs to be collected;
 - At the Monitoring and Evaluation stage, by enabling participants to implement procedures to examine their own activities.

Check Your Progress -2

- 1) The participatory methods are now generically referred to as **Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)**. Participatory Learning and Action combines:
 - **a set of diagramming and visual techniques** originally developed for livelihoods analysis and now widely used in Natural Resources

departments in development agencies. They have since been adapted for use in other sectors including enterprise development.

- **underlying principles of grassroots participation** from human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

2) Using participatory methods provides a useful way of:

- Rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts through exploring the interlinkages between different dimensions of livelihoods and poverty
- Prioritizing the different possible impact goals for assessment by identifying which of the range of possible impacts are most important for the primary stakeholders e.g. increased income versus decreased leisure, levels of income and/or working conditions expected
- Identifying reliable measurable or qualitative indicators which can be used in different contexts or for different target groups.



MDV-111: LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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BLOCK 2 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

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BLOCK 4 PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

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