Unit 6: Participatory Process, Gender Issues, and Community Envisioning

Definition, Purpose, Dynamics, Process and Benefits

ENVS 435: Watershed Management

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Participatory Approach in Watershed Management

- Definition of participatory: Characterized by participation, esp. in decision-making in an organization, community, or society; allowing members of the general public to take part. [Excerpted from Oxford Talking Dictionary. Copyright © 1998 The Learning Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved]

- Participatory is about developing mutually beneficial relationships in development that includes all groups involved; doing away with the one-sided or top-down approaches of the past!

- It entails the active involvement of people at the grassroots level in all aspects of IWM in order to empower marginal groups.
  - Participation should not be manipulated
  - It is not an easy process; but it is rewarding when done successfully.
  - It requires a fundamental behavioral change.
Participation and development

- Participation has been proven to be effective in the success of development activities at the local level.
- A world Bank official (Sandstrom, 1994) noted:
  - “through participation, we lost control of the project, and in doing so, gained ownership and sustainability, precious things in our business”
- Participation has been shown to be important for:
  - Sustainability of activities/projects (development)
  - Uncovering new dimensions and aspects of problems
  - Ensuring the involvement of disadvantaged groups
  - Building confidence of the local people
  - Leading to shared/mutual understanding
  - Helping in resolution of conflicts
  - Providing a sense of ownership to the target groups
  - Commitment on the part of both locals and agencies
Participation continued . . .

- Situations encountered in participation:
  - Initiation – getting the process started {“breaking the ice”}
  - Facilitation – encouraging and promoting participation
  - Co-optation – democratic means for selection (voting)
  - Induction - The action of bringing on, producing, or causing something

- Principles of relationships involved in people’s participation:
  - Mutual respect
  - Active involvement
  - Agree to disagree
  - Building consensus
  - Commitment to action

What are the objectives of participatory development?

- Participatory development involves:
  - People and their spatial orientation
  - Consideration of social & cultural values
  - Dialogue, consensus, facilitating and motivating
  - Decentralized approach (local focus)
  - Intersectoral and functional linkages
  - Community and user orientation
  - Human resource development (capacity building)
  - Sustainability and replicability
  - Resource orientation and multi-year planning (long-term)
  - Involvement of local representatives
  - Transparency and communication
Elements of participatory process for IWM

- PIWM is aimed at farmers’ & communities’ natural resource mgmt. for poverty alleviation and development within a watershed. The stakeholders themselves take charge. Farmer-led approach helps achieve empowerment & self-reliance.
- All technical assistance agents take on the role of facilitators of the participatory process rather than being merely agents of technology transfer.
- Key elements include:
  - Redefining the objectives of IWM
  - Envisioning of both farmers and professionals for IWM
  - Farmer empowerment and ownership of processes & programmes
  - Land use titling and tenure for farmers ownership
  - Mainstreaming of gender concerns (women & DAGs)
  - Assured short-term benefits generated by WM prog.
Other important elements of PIWM

- Farmer-led facilitation (local motivators)
- Farmer capacity building
- Farmer-led planning
- Farmer managed funding (loan & credit systems)
- Farmer’s local technology (ITK)
- Farmer-led monitoring and evaluation of watershed management programmes
Redefining IWM goals and activities

• Requires a new way of thinking in line with the definition of “participatory”.

• Sustainable PIWM defined as:
  • “Utilization and conservation of land, water and forest resources at farm household and community (watershed) level for continuously improved livelihood and human development.”

• In the present context, this means:
  • Natural resource management for human development within a target group,
  • Poverty alleviation through capital and income generation, and
  • Distributional equity among men and women within all social groups and castes.
Farmers’ and professionals’ envisioning

• Envision means to foresee, envisage, or visualize.
• Farmers’/professionals’ envisioning means:
  • To understand the philosophy of life of a given community
  • To find the best fitting dominant cultural slot for basing the PIWM programme
  • To search for common, as well as, special moral values
  • To find appropriate leaders for moral revitalization and regeneration
  • To emphasize and help local leaders to cultivate good moral virtues and righteous attitudes
  • To learn from previous successes and failures
  • To develop a need-based curriculum for training of trainers for both farmers and professionals (conservation workers).
Farmers’ empowerment and ownership

- Farmers’ right to organize
  - Network building; farmers’ organizations
- Right to use their own land and other resources
  - Land use titling & tenure (security of title or tenure)
  - Government support services clearly defined
  - Long-term basis for land lease to users (e.g., leasehold)
  - Land titling to women
  - Watershed protection, socio-economic & policy issues comprehensively discussed and clarified with land users.
- Equity among all segments of society
  - Mainstreaming of gender issues – women’s capacity building
  - Facilitating women’s participation at field level
  - Gender sensitization/training at institutional level
- Assured short-term benefits
  - Acceptable time frame for returns
  - Net direct benefits to the farmers
What is community envisioning exercise?

- This is a social interactive process designed to help define community’s development aspiration and to develop a mental picture of the state to be achieved (visualizing).

What is the purpose of community envisioning?

A vision is a power tool; that motivates action to achieve success. It is a necessary tool for all – individuals, families, communities, nations, regions, and even for the world.

Malaysia has a vision called Vision 2020 – that is, a vision to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

SAARC, ASEAN, EEC all have visions of their own.

Agenda 21 is another example of a world vision.

So why not a vision for the community?
What are the Dynamics involved in the Community envisioning exercise?

1. A continuing process:
   • A vision for the future cannot remain the same.
   • Like the horizon, it challenges and guides us to move ahead.
   • As we progress and reach our goals, the ‘horizon’ continues to move ahead of us.

2. A participatory process:
   • The more people involved in the process the better.
   • Ownership of the vision must be transferred to the community.
   • The stronger the ownership, the stronger the action, collaboration, and cooperation among the community members.
3. A consensus document:

- Consensus means giving as well as taking, with the spirit of common good as the overriding principle. It is creating a win-win situation for all.

4. Owned by the community:

A community vision must be owned by the community.
The local leaders must keep this vision always visible.
Good leaders are masters in creating community visions and in transferring the ownership of the vision to the community.

5. There must be a mission to attain the vision:

Mission means a defined statement of commitment and action to attain the vision.
How to plan a community envisioning exercise for natural resource management at the watershed level through people’s participation.

A prerequisite for the planning process: Envisioning should precede any development planning that requires the involvement and participation of people.

Participants: The participants must be the stakeholders, carefully selected for the envisioning.

The facilitators and the reporters: They can be brought in or selected from amongst the participants.

The duration: Experience shows it should not be less than five hours.

The schedule:

Various groups brainstorm and develop a draft version.

A collective draft version is finalized.

A mission statement is developed.

A collective draft mission is finalized.
What are the benefits of the community envisioning exercise?

Three clear distinct groups of benefits

- First, it is a very effective way of bringing a community together for interaction, consensus-building, and decision-making.
- Second, it is an excellent approach for creating community awareness, education, and empowerment.
- Third, it is a powerful mechanism for motivation, promoting commitment, and initiating action at the community level for self-improvement.
Participatory Planning

• Process in which the beneficiaries (target groups) act as the decision makers in the planning process.
• It is an effort to bring the farmers or local people to the center of decision-making while planning community development interventions.
• It helps:
  • Community to make plans according to their needs
  • Places emphasis on mobilizing local resources
  • Generates interaction among the local farmers
  • Identify real problems and their solutions (local)
  • Avoid pitfalls, unrealistic situations and discrepancies
Participatory Monitoring

- Systems for monitoring (measurement, recording, collecting, processing, communicating information and decision-making) are designed by the participatory groups for their own use & simplicity.

- PaM should ensure at all levels of implementation that:
  - The plans are followed
  - People are informed
  - Inputs are on time
  - Resources are properly used
  - Adjustments/corrective actions are taken
Participatory Evaluation

• Evaluation done by local participatory groups or beneficiaries themselves;
• These groups are responsible for analyzing the information gathered from PaM and making the necessary decisions.
• Steps in Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation:
  • Understand the projects goals and objectives
  • Identify the activities to achieve the objectives
  • Develop indicators for each activity to be done
  • Present the information to farmers/community, and
  • Develop charts for each activity of the action plan with targets and achievement for decision-making.
Indicators of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

- Measurements employed to assess changes or show progress/results of activities.
- Indicators should be SMART:
  - S – specific
  - M – measurable
  - A – attainable
  - R – realistic
  - T – Time bound
- They should reflect:
  - The target group (needs)
  - Quantity (outputs or results)
  - Quality (desired level of outputs)
  - Place, site or location (location specific)
  - Time (given time frame)
Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

- Semi-structured activity conducted in the field by an interdisciplinary team.
- Bottom-up – detailed discussion with the target groups, but is still largely appraisal by outsiders.

Key features:
- Iterative – data collection, analysis & review are on-going (repeated) steps throughout the study; “learn as you go”.
- Flexible – sequence of activities and goals are not fixed, but constantly under review and may be modified.
- Innovative – no simple, standardized method; techniques developed & modified based on local circumstances.
- Interactive – interdisciplinary & lateral thinking.
- Informal – partly structured, informal interviews/discussions.
- In the community – it is carried out in the field, amongst the beneficiaries (land/resource users, local communities).
Participatory Rural Appraisal

• Professional go to rural areas, but role is more to facilitate collection, presentation & analysis of info. by the rural people themselves.
• Outsiders sit down with farmers, listen & learn from them and respect local expertise, wisdom & IK.
• Features similar to RRA:
  • Reversal of learning – locals and outsiders learn from each other.
  • Rapid and progressive learning – flexible; conscious choice of methods.
  • Triangulation – used to cross-check and confirm data
  • Optimal ignorance sought – find out only what is necessary (not learn more than is needed; overly precise)
  • Biases recognized & offset
  • Balanced team composition (gender, disciplines, etc.)
  • Trade-off are sought between quantity, accuracy, timeliness and relevance of information.
Additional features of PRA

- **They [local participants] do it** – professionals merely initiate and encourage the process; local rural people do the actual investigation, analysis, presentation & learning.
- **Self critical awareness** – participants continuously examining their behavior and trying to do better.
- **Relaxing and not rushing** – taking plenty of time.
- **Embracing error** – learning from mistakes.
- **Using own best judgment** – taking/accepting personal responsibility for decisions.
- **Sharing of information and ideas** – exchange of knowledge/info between all concerned parties.
Appreciative Planning and Action (APA)

- Grass-roots community level planning and mobilisation building upon PRA, AI (Appreciative Inquiry) and other group dynamics methods.
- Mission statement of APA:
  - To empower communities and individuals to:
    - Take pride in what and who they are; what they have achieved
    - Dream of what might (or could) be
    - Plan for what can be; and
    - Feel the energy that comes from making commitments and completing the first step
  - To be simple enough that anyone can do it; profound enough to change people’s lives.
  - APA is a learning process with no fixed recipe!
Overview of APA principles

• One goal: seek root causes of success (not failure)

• Two Laws:
  • What you seek is what you find (the questions you ask determine the answers you get!)
  • Where you believe you are going is where you will end up.

• Three Principles:
  • If you look for problems, you find more problems
  • If you look for successes, you find more successes
  • If you have faith in your dreams, you can achieve miracles

• The Four ‘D’s:
  • Discovery – ask positive questions, seek what works, empowers
  • Dream – Visioning of what could be, where we want to go
  • Design – Make action plan; make personal commitments
  • Delivery – Start taking action, now [immediately]!
Gender Issues in PIWM

- Gender – socially & culturally constructed differences (as opposed to biological differences) between men and women.
- Gender divisions are learned behavior and change over time (i.e., dynamic).
- Gender is about both women and men, in relation to one another.
- Gender relations take into account the different roles assumed by men & women in a household and within the community.
- It determines their perspectives, knowledge and needs linked to their assigned tasks in household or community.
- Hence it important to consider gender division of labor in PIWM.
Why consider gender in watershed management?

• Both men and women are members of watershed communities and active participants in development!
• Each play different, yet vital roles in watershed resource use and management.
• Women have been traditionally or overlooked excluded from proper representation in the development and planning/decision-making process.
• Women often have a greater role in many rural farm and household activities that impact the watershed and environment.
• Watershed development/mgmt. programmes have been shown to be less successful when gender relations are not considered.
Myths preventing women’s involvement in IWM programmes

- Women do only domestic work; they do not contribute significantly to household income.
- Each member of the family shares benefits equally. Actually, females are often deprived of various benefits (education, nutrition, etc.).
- Technology will automatically benefit men and women equally. Often targeted towards men and not women.
- Woman’s voice will be heard through her male relatives (husband, father-in-law, brother, etc.).
- Women are incompetent at certain activities. Most inequities are social rather than biological, and women can be equally good at all types of activities (public speaking; discussion; meetings, etc.)
Role of ITK in IWM

- I.T.K. stands for:
  - Indigenous technical knowledge, or
  - Indigenous technology and knowledge
- Definition of indigenous: Born or produced in a particular land or region; (esp. of flora and fauna) native or belonging naturally to (a region, a soil, etc.), not introduced.
- Indigenous Knowledge or technology then, is that which is of local origin and initiative and not simply brought in from outside.
- It reflects innovativeness on the part of locals in using ideas that may be from other places and adapting it to their own local needs & conditions.
‘Indigenous’ is not synonymous with ‘traditional’

- Traditional generally means handed down from one generation to the next.
- Belonging to or of the nature of tradition; handed down by or derived from tradition; Excerpted from Oxford Talking Dictionary. Copyright © 1998 The Learning Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
- Hence, traditional practices may or may not be of local origin; they may have been introduced a long time ago by outsiders.
- However, indigenous means being derived locally, and may or may not be traditional (old).
- In fact, indigenous practices or technology may be relatively new and still evolving!
Types/categories of indigenous knowledge & technology

• Related to farming practices:
  • Crop production techniques
  • Types and varieties of crops/plants
  • Soil management practices (tillage, compost, bio-pesticides)
  • Terracing and other land management

• Water use and management:
  • Water source protection (dug wells, springs, tanks)
  • Water harvesting and conservation
  • Water transfer and distribution; water use efficiency (irrigation)

• Forest management and conservation:
  • Fodder tree, shrub & grass species
  • Community and private forests
  • Agroforestry practices & planting trees on farmland
  • Wood and non-wood forest products
ITK - Examples

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Instr.: Dr. R.M. Bajracharya
Wooden aqueduct

Bamboo aqueduct

Vegetative gully stabilization

Water tap & tank protection
Brush-wood fish trap

Rope noose fish trap

Canal water cascade

Leaf-litter trap for canal under-pass
Water mill ("pani ghatta")

Wooden oxen plow

Bamboo fish-trap (A-frame)

Drop structure for safe water disposal
Use of wind for separation
Butter-making
Separating milk-fat
Bamboo umbrella
Stone grinding wheel
Alcohol distillation

Resting stick

Grain pulverizing “Dhiki”

Local bee hive for apiculture