# Participatory Learning and Action [PLA]

A Brief Introduction

Kamal Phuyal

Participatory exercises must play a supporting role to encourage marginalized people to speak out against the unjust existing in the society

Title:          Participatory Learning and Action [PLA]:
                a brief introduction

First impression:          March 2008

Copy right ©:          Kamal Phuyal

**Beginning**

I do not encourage anyone to use the manual for conducting participatory exercises. Manual does not allow us to be flexible to facilitate the development process. But, we can refer the guideline which can help us to work together with the community people. Listening to others' experience always support the facilitators to enrich their capabilities.

Facilitators must use best judgements at all the times and only practical experiences enable facilitators to internalise the social context and use their best judgements. This handout is expected to be helpful for understanding the application process of participatory methods for participatory development process, to some extent.

I have tried to incorporate my practical experiences from different countries in the handouts. To make the handouts more visual, I have put some photographs and the specimen of participatory tools. I hope this will help you to facilitate participatory exercises in order to learn from the community people.

Thank you.

# Contents

## Participation

The concept of participation has been popular among development actors both in government and non-governmental sectors in the world. It has been attracting growing attention of academic institutes as well. Many researchers have involved in participatory research works. Many donors have incorporated these terms into their major mission of development. The 'participation practitioners' working with the grassroots advocate the importance of people's participation in a development process for real social change.

Like many other nations, Nepal has incorporated 'participation' in its national constitution. In article 25, sub article 4, participation is defined as one of the major pillars for national development (Constitution of Nepal, 1991). Based on this, the self-governance act has been approved for the transformation of Nepalese society. Besides, thousands of non-governmental organisations in Nepal are 'advocating' and 'practicing' participatory development. Past decade has witnessed a great interest in participatory methods as instruments for working in partnership with the community for development. There has also been a rapid expansion of new participatory methods and approaches in the context of sustainable dev4elopment. Participatory approaches are now widely used in processes of policy-making, development planning, governance and community empowerment in a wide variety of contexts.

Some of the descriptions of participation, various institutions have revealed, are as follows:

> OXFORD dictionary defines participation, as "participation is the act of taking part in an activity or event (OXFORD Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000).

> People's participation is essentially to do with economic and political relationships within the wider society; it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather the process by which rural people are able to organise themselves and, through their own organisation, are able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action (FAO, 1982).

> Participation is the fostering of a dialogue between the local people and the project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation staff in order

to obtain information on the local context and on social impacts (Mikkelsen, B., 2002).

Participation is to achieve a special kind of power - people's power - which belongs to the oppressed and exploited classes and groups and their organizations, and the defence of their just interests to enable them to advance towards shared goals of social change within a participatory system (Rahnema, M. Development Dictionary, 2000).

Participation has been accepted as a mandatory approach in strategies for development organisations globally. However, on the other hand, participation has been crowned 'the new tyranny' (Mikkelsen 2005). Many more challenges in the social development field have emerged. The gap between the rich and poor is only widening. Millions of people are in a worse condition now than over a decade ago (HD Report 2003).

Many questions here rise about participatory development. Many people say that there is a vast difference between saying and actually practicing participatory development. It is also said that participation no longer has the radical connotations it once had during the radical popular movements of the 1960s (Mosse 2002) which had contributed highly for people's participation in the social transformation processes. Most development workers, both individuals and organisations, impose their already planned ideas over the people and wrap it nicely with the flag of 'participatory development concept'.

"Organisation's participation in community's issues or community's participation in organisation's agendas" has been a prominent question while discussing about participation. Many organisations, both donors and implementing agencies, want to impose their agendas on the local people by using 'participatory approach' to legitimise their ideas - one serious criticism is there. This criticism is found true to some extent. Our understanding about participation is that 'organisations (outsiders) should participate in community's issues which will help the local people, preferably marginalized people, to analyse their situation and plan for the better future using their indigenous knowledge and local resources. Outsiders can be facilitators in this process.

## Types of participation

Types or ladder of participation should be observed carefully to measure the level of participation. Pretty and others (1995) have described stages of participation varying levels of involvement in the community.
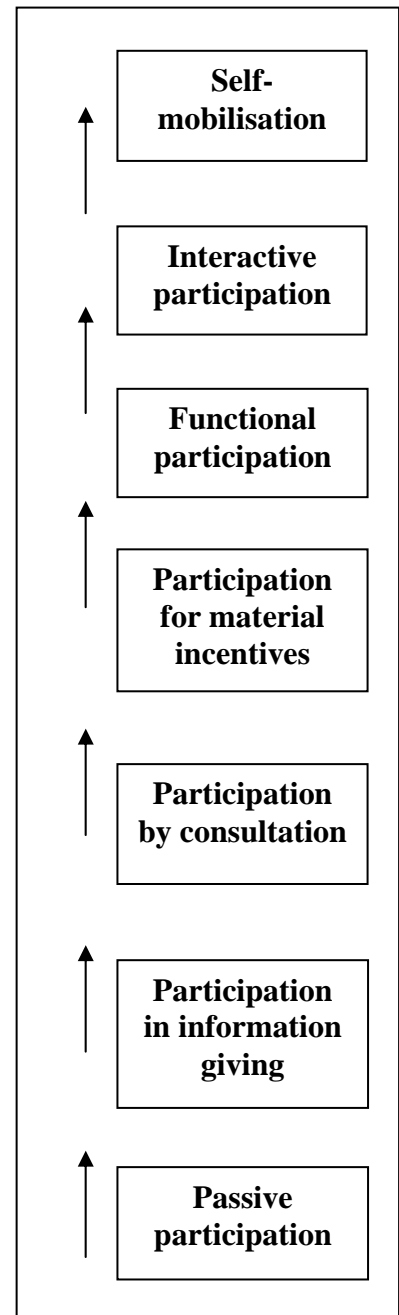
**(a) Passive participation:** People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs (only) to external professionals.

**(b) Participation in information giving:** People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

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

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

Self-mobilisation

Interactive participation

Functional participation

Participation for material incentives

Participation by consultation

Participation in information giving

Passive participation

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

**(f) Interactive participation:** People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

**(g) Self-mobilisation:** People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutional for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.
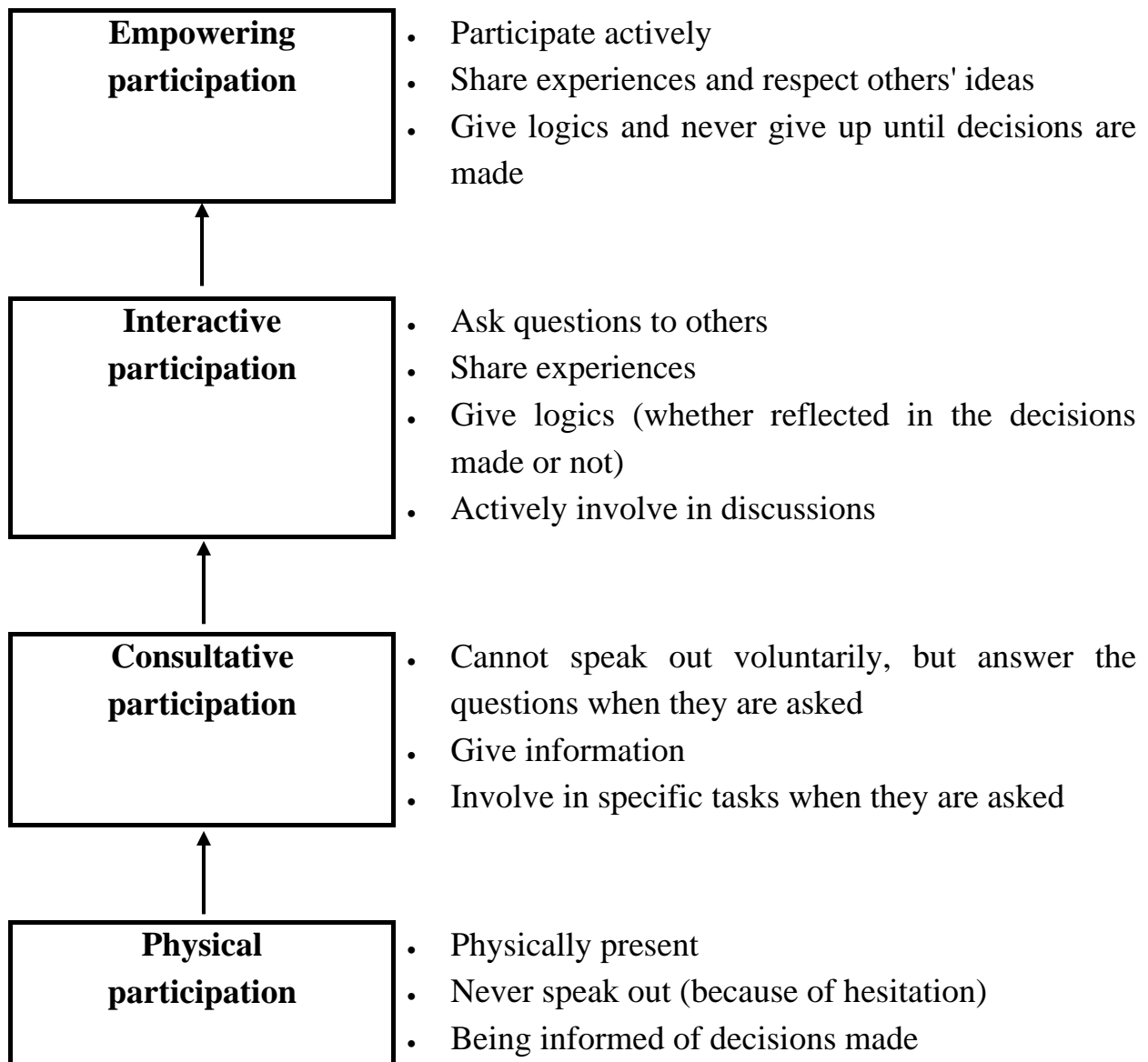
*Source: PLA notes (1995), Pretty et al.*

When local people's participation in development process increases, local control over the process will strengthen. As shown in the box on the right, level of participation of the local people become stronger means their power of control over the process gets stronger as well. Thus, ensuring people's active participation initiates the empowerment process. However, using the term 'community' alone does not provide clear meaning. Facilitators who apply participatory approach for people empowerment should clearly mention that 'marginalised people's participation is necessary for the real change.



**Community's control**

**Outsiders' control**
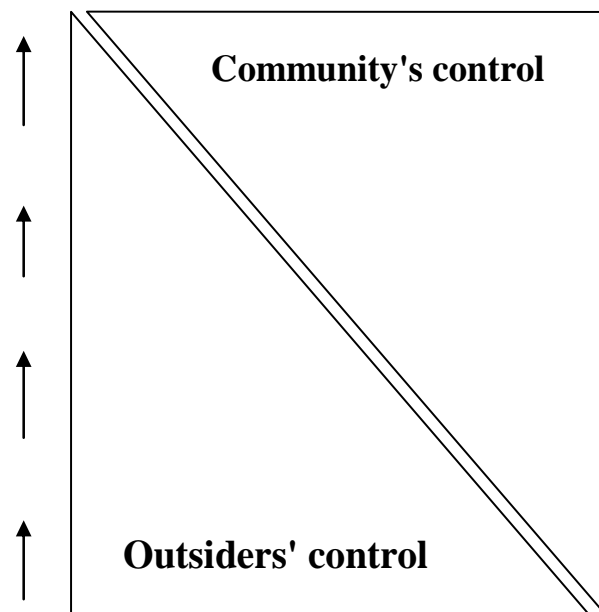
## Level of participation in 'participatory exercises'

The level of people's participation in exercises varies considerably in qualities. Facilitators must be aware of each participant's participation level and facilitate properly to bring them into 'empowering participation' level. The following table helps to understand the level of participation in various exercises.

| **Empowering participation** | • Participate actively<br>• Share experiences and respect others' ideas<br>• Give logics and never give up until decisions are made |
|---|---|
| **Interactive participation** | • Ask questions to others<br>• Share experiences<br>• Give logics (whether reflected in the decisions made or not)<br>• Actively involve in discussions |
| **Consultative participation** | • Cannot speak out voluntarily, but answer the questions when they are asked<br>• Give information<br>• Involve in specific tasks when they are asked |
| **Physical participation** | • Physically present<br>• Never speak out (because of hesitation)<br>• Being informed of decisions made |

Facilitators must:
- Be aware of level of participation in exercises.
- Recognise the participants who cannot go to the upper level of participation. Facilitators should encourage them for their active participation.

## Obstacles for participation

Some of the obstacles for participation are presented below.

| 1. | Lack of time | • Busy people cannot participate in exercises. |
| | | • In most cases, poor people are busy and away of home during the day time while most 'development works' are done. |
| 2. | Caste discrimination | • So called low caste people cannot speak out in front of 'upper caste' people. |
| | | • In many cases, 'upper caste' people dominate others with their voices. |
| 3. | Hesitation and fear | • Marginalised people have fear and hesitation to speak out in the mass. They keep quite though they have ideas and have willingness to share. |
| 4. | Lack of information | • People cannot even physically present due to the lack of information. |
| | | • Sometimes people are not given proper information about the 'participatory exercises'. |
| 5. | Poor hesitate to speak out in front of rich | • In most cases, poor people hesitate to speak out in front of rich. |
| | | • Or sometime they just nod their heads agreeing with the ideas of rich and powerful because of hesitation. |
| 6. | Illiterate hesitate to speak out in front of 'educated' | • Illiterate often hesitates to speak out in front of education people. |
| | | • Illiterate cannot participate when 'pens and papers' are used as they are not familiar with such things. |
| 7. | Patriarchal society: women's participation is low | • Women hesitate to participate in front of men. |
| | | • Women's voices are sometimes ignored by men. |
| | | • Many women cannot speak out in front of their in-laws. |
| 8. | Lack of understanding about importance of participation | • People cannot or do not show their interest to participate if its importance is not clear. |
| 9. | Language differences | • Lack of language ability hinders participation. |
| 10. | Health problem | • Ill and weak people (physically) cannot participate. |
| 11. | Inappropriate space | • Especially women's participation is low if discussions are done in public place. |
| | | • Difficult sitting arrangement also hinders participation. |
| 12. | Environmental factors | • Rain, thunderstone, too much heat can also hamper participation. |
| | | • Accidents and political events sometimes hinder participation. |

## Societal structure [discrimination]

Facilitators must understand the societal structure to facilitate the participatory exercises for the active participation of the marginalised people in the development process. The following table gives an idea to understand the societal structure in Nepalese context.

| Economic | Caste/Ethnicity | Gender | Regional |
|----------|-----------------|--------|----------|
| Very Rich | 'Upper caste' | Male | Capital |
| ↓ | ↓ ↘ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Rich | | | Cities |
| ↓ | | | ↓ |
| Middle | 'Ethnic groups' | | Village |
| ↓ | ↓ | | ↓ |
| Poor | | | |
| ↓ | | | |
| Very Poor | 'Lower caste' | Female | Remote villages |

Facilitators must be aware of the following situations for effective facilitation:
- Existing diversities in the society.
- Existing power structure in the society.
- Situation of powerless people.
- Characteristics of the marginalised people.
- Existing societal discrimination.
- Causes and effects of discrimination.

## Poverty pond and poor people

Whose participation? is a very crucial question when participatory process is discussed. Poor people themselves are often excluded from poverty alleviation planning process. Such plans cannot initiate poverty alleviation. People involved in poverty alleviation plans can be divided into four types:
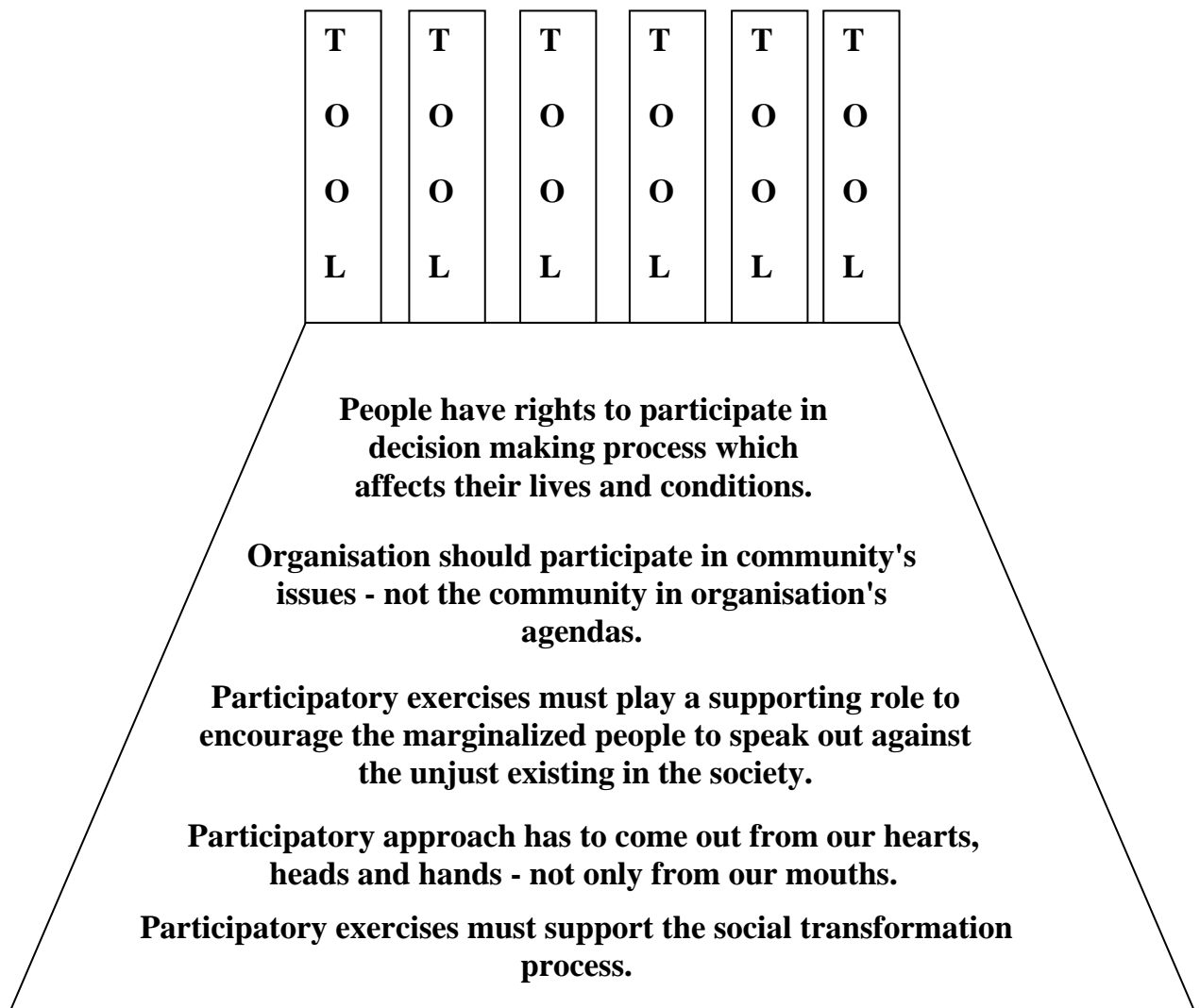
### *Poverty pond*
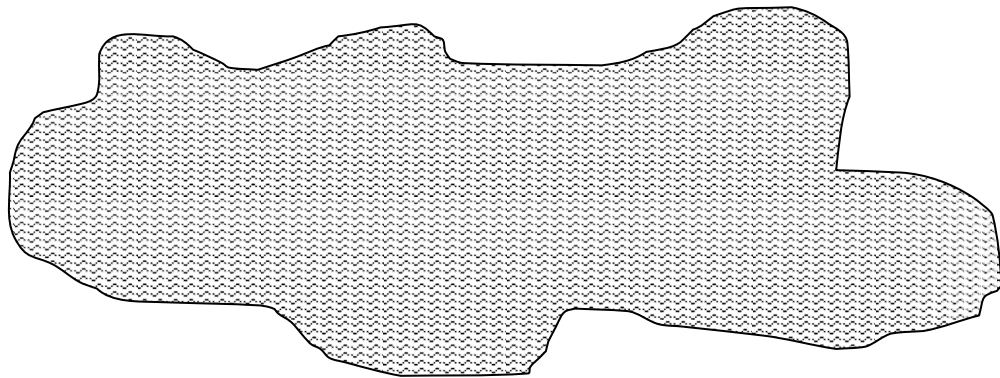
1. Those who are sinking in poverty pond.

2. Those who are swimming in poverty pond.

3. Those who are watching poverty from near by.

4. Those who have heard and read poverty.

## Who controls poverty alleviation planning process?

Some important points:
- Without active participation of poor people (number 1 and 2), poverty alleviation process never initiate.
- People from number 3 and 4 category can be facilitators.
- Poverty analysis and planning process must be poor people friendly: easy and simple.
- Visual process encourages people to participate actively.
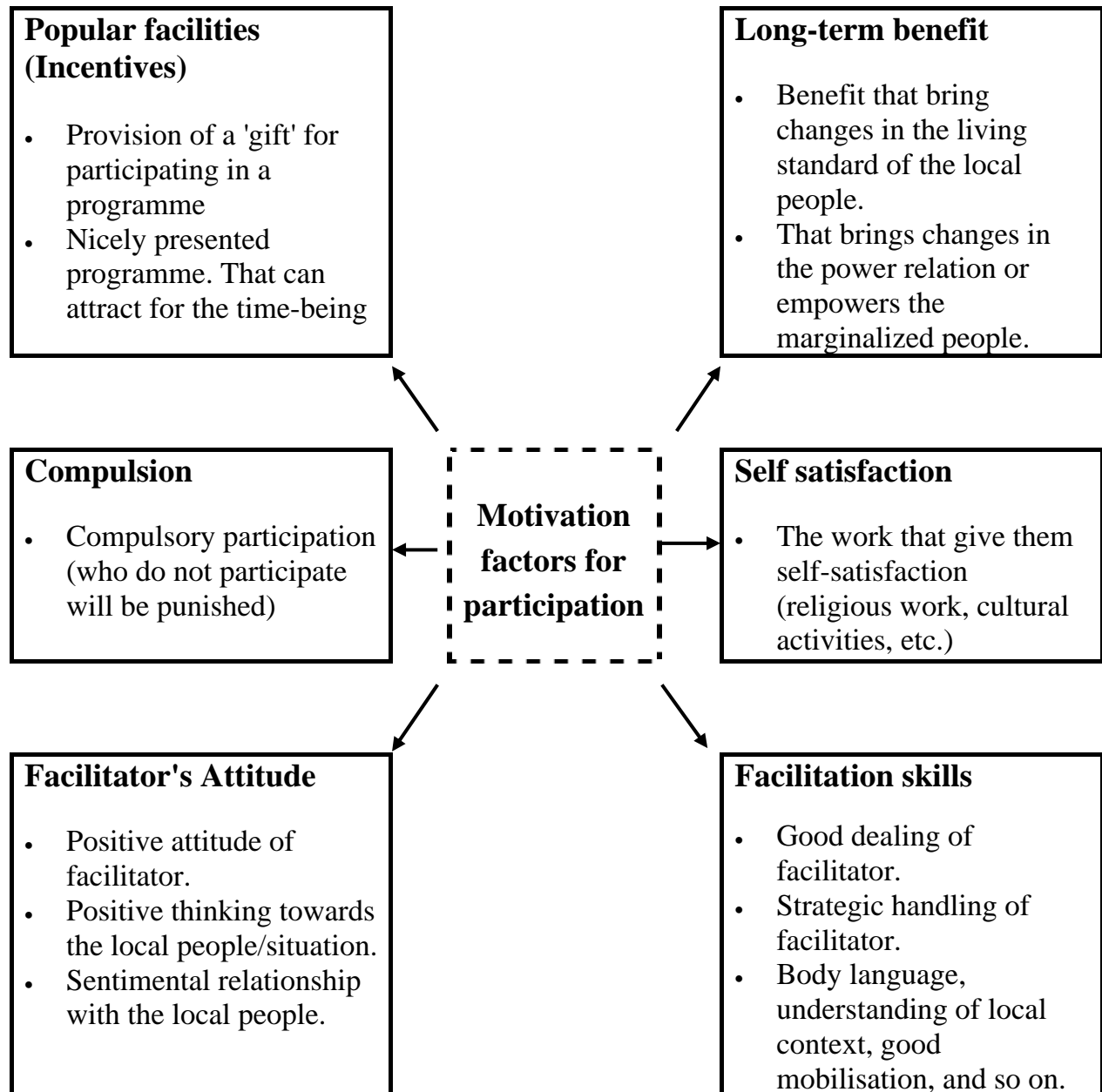
## Values of participatory approach



**T O O L** **T O O L** **T O O L** **T O O L** **T O O L** **T O O L**

**People have rights to participate in
decision making process which
affects their lives and conditions.**

**Organisation should participate in community's
issues - not the community in organisation's
agendas.**

**Participatory exercises must play a supporting role to
encourage the marginalized people to speak out against
the unjust existing in the society.**

**Participatory approach has to come out from our hearts,
heads and hands - not only from our mouths.**

**Participatory exercises must support the social transformation
process.**

Some important points:
- Facilitators should internalise the values of participatory approach first.
- Application of 'participatory tools' can help just to extract the information if the values of participation is not internalised.
- Participatory tools can be modified or new tools can be created as per the situation demands. However, all the tools should be based on participatory values.
- Applications of tools mechanically can disempower people. Empowerment of the local people through participatory process becomes only rhetoric.

## Motivation factors for participation

Basically, six types of motivation factors can be found which motive local people to participate in development process.

| Popular facilities (Incentives) | Long-term benefit |
|---|---|
| • Provision of a 'gift' for participating in a programme <br> • Nicely presented programme. That can attract for the time-being | • Benefit that bring changes in the living standard of the local people. <br> • That brings changes in the power relation or empowers the marginalized people. |

**Motivation factors for participation**

| Compulsion | Self satisfaction |
|---|---|
| • Compulsory participation (who do not participate will be punished) | • The work that give them self-satisfaction (religious work, cultural activities, etc.) |

| Facilitator's Attitude | Facilitation skills |
|---|---|
| • Positive attitude of facilitator. <br> • Positive thinking towards the local people/situation. <br> • Sentimental relationship with the local people. | • Good dealing of facilitator. <br> • Strategic handling of facilitator. <br> • Body language, understanding of local context, good mobilisation, and so on. |

Some important points:
- 'Incentives' can encourage people to participate in the beginning, however it can be sustainable.
- 'Compulsion' factor can initiate people's participation and let them feel the importance. It sometimes creates negative impact if not used properly.

## Participatory tools

There are various participatory tools to enable people to express and share information, and to stimulate discussion and analysis. Many are visually based, involving local people in creativity. People (in rural context) use local materials, such as sticks, stones, grasses, wood, tree leaves, and soils to share the local information and analyse their condition. Many of the villagers are not familiar with paper and pens. Mainly for the illiterate villagers it can be quite different: illiterate people hesitate to participate if pens and papers are used.

Participatory exercises usually take place in groups, working on the ground or on paper. The process is more participatory, and helps empower those who are not literate. Visual techniques provide scope for creativity and encourage a frank exchange of views. They also allow crosschecking. Using a combination of participatory tools a very detailed picture can be built up, one that expresses the complexity and diversity of local people's realities far better than traditional way of surveys. A list of participatory tools is shown below:

**Mapping tools**
- Social mapping
- Resource mapping
- Mobility mapping
- Transect walk/ mapping
- Body mapping
- (Others)

**Diagramming tools**
- Seasonal calendar
- Time line
- Time trend diagram
- Flow diagram
- Daily routine diagram
- Institutional diagram
- Cause & effect diagram
- (Others)

Participatory Tools

**Ranking tools**
- Well-being ranking
- Pair-wise ranking
- Matrix ranking
- Happiness ranking
- (Others)

**Others**
- Pictures
- Theatre for development (TFD)
- (Others)

**Discussions/Interview tools**
- Focus group discussion
- Semi-structure interview
- (Others)
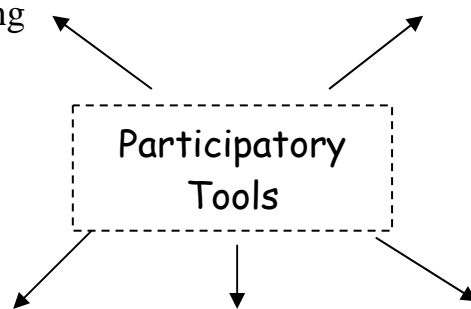
Some of participatory tools have been described briefly onward.
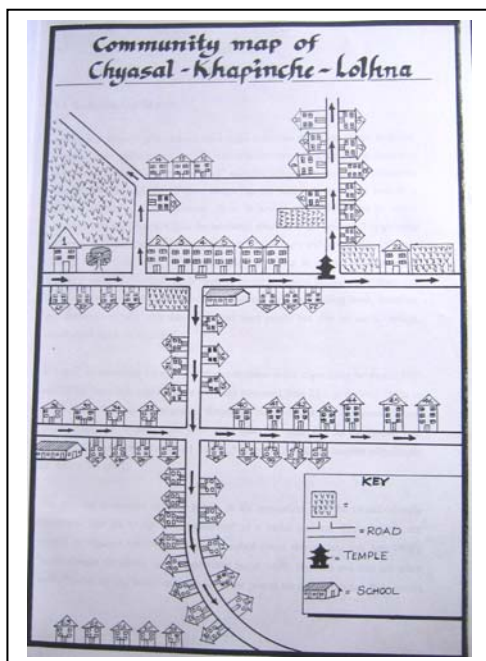
## A. Social mapping

In most heterogeneous societies a number of caste, ethnicity, social and economic groups are there. It is important to understand the stratification of the communities both in terms of resource and their access and distribution. Understanding on social structure in community is crucial in order to carry on the development activities that aim the empowerment of marginalized section. Social map tool can be better for this analysis.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

- The existing social objects in the community: household, road, path, temple, mosque, school, tap stands, well, land, forest, grazing land, pond, health post, hospital, traditional healing centre, etc.
- Population; male, female, different age group's male and female, number of sick people, disable, victim of chronic disease, education status, literate number, number of, etc.
- Available of resources and its uses; who are using the resources? Etc.
- Who do not have access to resources? And why?
- Any other required information.

**Process:**

Initially a general introduction of the objectives of the exercise must be given. Then the villagers should be encouraged to draw the map of the village. In order to encourage them to participate, the facilitator should initiate first to draw. Then every effort must be given to handover the leadership, the map usually is drawn in the common ground using local materials for representation as much as possible. This ensures interest and encourages participation of the community. Constant effort must be given to get women and children's perspective or separate map can be drawn as well.



A map of a settlement in Kathmandu

Villagers making social map in a rural village of Nepal →



Village-condition analysis using social map in Vietnam

## B. Resource mapping

Resource map indicates existing natural resources in the village including the land and water resources. The uses of these resources and accessibility of the poor people to these resources are also analysed. Resource map also shows the quality or status of each resource. This map helps in identifying and inventorying various types of resources in the village and their characteristics in the initial stages of the development process itself. Mapping process also facilitates local people to plan how these resources can be utilised for the empowerment of the marginalised people.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

- Available natural resources: natural, human, social, economic, material/physical resources.
- Use of those resources.
- Access of the marginalised people to those resources.
- Potential use of those resources in future.

**Process:**
- Explain the objectives of this exercise to the villagers.
- Ask to draw a map of the villager.
- Facilitate to show the available resources in the map.
- Discuss the status or quality of the resources.
- Discuss how the resources are being utilised and who have access to these resources.
- Discuss and plan how these resources can be used in the future.



Resource map of a village of Nara, Japan



Villagers discussing resources
using mapping tool in a village
in Nara, Japan

## C. Transect walk

This is a systematic walk with the local people of the community observing, asking, listening, looking, identifying different zones, seeking opportunities and areas for improvements. The findings can be shown in social map or on a transect diagram.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- Identification of different zones.
- Opportunities and areas for improvements in each zone.
- Other information; major crops, vegetables, trees, livestock, soil types, etc.

**Process:**
- The facilitators should explain the objectives and process the walk.
- Facilitators have a walk around the village with the villagers.
- Outsiders ask questions and learn from the villagers about the local situation.
- Better to follow the 'U' shape for walk in order to have deeper understanding about the area.
- Draw a transect map and show the information to make it easily understandable.



A specimen of a transect map



Facilitators on transect walk in a village in Japan



Facilitators learning from the villagers during the transect walk in a village in Nepal

## D. Mobility mapping

This tool is used to get an understanding about people' movement for different reasons with different purposes.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

The mobility of the community people with different objectives; for:
- Treatment,
- Marketing,
- Education,
- Employment,
- Visit/religious trip,
- Marriage,
- Water fetching, etc.

**Process:**
Simply ask question like where do people go for employment opportunity and start from within or nearest to the furthest place. This will give a general understanding about peoples' movement and interdependency for various reasons.



A specimen of a mobility map of the villagers of Kavre village of Nepal



Women discussing their mobility to different places for different purposes

## E. Pair-wise ranking

These methods confirm their value for learning from local people about their categories, criteria, choices and priorities. The major reasons of preferences are derived which than can be again scored basing on a single indicator progression. It helps to prioritise the problems as well as projects.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- (To identify the preferences of the local people)
- Local people's preferences for a particular subject
- Prioritisation of the local people's preferences.
- (To categorise the problems according to people's ideas)
- List of problems and priority given by people themselves logically.
- List of indicators given by people for prioritisation.
- The reasons for people prioritise some species.

## Process

For pair-wise ranking items of interest are compared pair by pair, informants being asked which is preferred of the two, and why. Matrix ranking and scoring takes criteria for the rows in a matrix and items for columns, and people fill in the boxes for each row.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A** | X | A | C | A | A |
| **B** | X | X | C | B | B |
| **C** | X | X | X | C | C |
| **D** | X | X | X | X | E |
| **E** | X | X | X | X | X |
| Total counting | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 |

An example of pair-wise ranking exercise process ←



Adolescent girls prioritizing their needs in a rural village of Nepal



NGO workers prioritizing their problems (Okinawa, Japan)

## F. Well-being ranking

Well-being ranking helps to identify groups or cluster of families/households according to relative wealth or well-being. The indicators are set by the respondents themselves to categorise the households into different socio-economic categories. Various ways of well-being ranking process can be found.

**Information to be shared:**
- Well-being of the households of the community.
- Well-being indicators of each category.
- Poverty status. Etc.

**Process:**
- Prepare a set of cards (3x4") and write the names of the household as per shown on the social map. One name on one card.
- Explain the objectives of the exercise.
- Explain the name of the households written on the cards. This will help respondents to recall the households of the community.
- Ask which family has the best situation socio-economically. Use easy word or terms that reveal well-being easily.
- Put that card (as shown by the respondent) on one side.
- Then, ask who is in must difficult condition as per the well-being.
- Put that card on other side.
- Then, ask about other cards. Ask one by one: where do they categorise. This is how, participants put cards into different well-being categories.
- Ask the indicators of each category. "Why do you put these cards into this particular category?"
- Make a list of indicators into each category.



Youth members of a village exercising well-being status of the villager/families

A specimen of well-being ranking outcomes

| Category | No. of families | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| Very Rich | 10 | • . <br> • . <br> • . |
| Rich | 20 | • . <br> • . <br> • . |
| Middle | 32 | • . <br> • . <br> • . |
| Poor | 22 | • . <br> • . <br> • . |
| Very poor | 12 | • . <br> • . <br> • . <br> • . |

## G. Timeline

Timeline is a history of major recollected events in a community with approximates dates, and discussion of which changes have occurred. This has been found to be a good icebreaker for participatory exercises. This tool helps to understand the village's history and to contextualise the present in comparison with it's past events. A general understanding of the major event occurrence is quite important. For this purpose persons are considered and their views and concerns are listed. For better reference purpose date along side is also given. Sometimes, while giving the dates become quite difficult; then different references can be made and the facilitator can cleverly calculate the date. For example, the major events can be used to finalise the date i.e. the year of earthquake, the year of democracy, the year of land measurement and so on.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- The historical events took place locally or in national level which affect in the community; like flood, fire, epidemic, establishment of health centres and so on.
- The date of events.
- Effect of that events and so on.

**Process:**

Initially we ask about what are the main events that have occurred during over lifetime. Then we should get a list of events and the probable occurrence date and alongside we can further probe and ask what did all do and what happened? This comes up with various actions and its effectiveness. This process or format can follow to share the information with the help of timeline tool. Timeline of the village can be discussed using the following format.

| Date | Events | Effects |
|------|--------|---------|
|      |        |         |



A villager explaining the history of village, Nara, Japan



Facilitator listening to a village man about the history of village, Makawanpur, Nepal

## H. Daily routine diagram

This tool is used to identify the workload of men and women in a community. It helps to compare the workload between man and woman in a family.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

- Different works done within a day.
- Time spent for different work.
- Comparison of the workload between male and female.

**Process:**

- It should be done with a spouse (wife and husband) or with a son and a daughter of the same family so that workload between male and female can be compared.
- Explain the objectives of the exercise in the beginning of the exercise.
- Discuss the daily schedule/routine with a respondent (better to do it with one member at a time).
- Discuss the total timing spent for different topic; study hours, household working hours, entertainment hours and so on.



Daily routine diagram of a spouse of Kavre village of Kavre district of Nepal

## I. Cause and effect diagram

This tool helps to find out the causes and effects of the problems. The real causes and effects are diagnosed as the local people lead the discussions. Outsiders attain greater opportunity to learn the realities from the local people. This tool is known as 'tree diagram' as villagers find easy to discuss cause and effects making a tree.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- Causes of the problems (what to be discussed on should be finalised first).
- Effects or impacts of the problems.
- Various aspects of the problems.

**Process:**

Find the problem first to initiate discussion. Put problem in the middle and ask the causes. See the linkages between causes mentioned. Likewise, ask to discuss the effects of the problems.
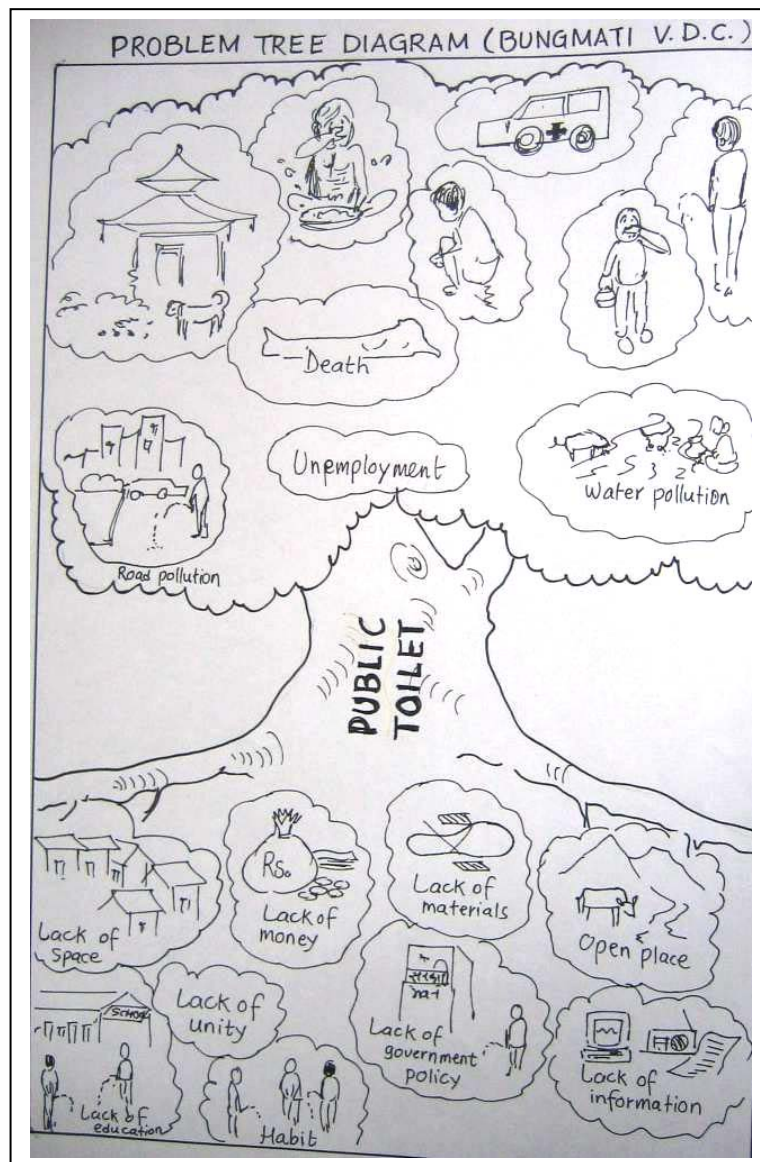


An example of cause and effect diagram exercised in a village of Kathmandu

## J. Seasonal calendar

Seasonal calendar helps to explore seasonal constraints and opportunities by diagramming changes month by month throughout the year. Usually, information on cropping patterns, fuel wood deficiency, credit requirement, income and expenditure, food sufficiency, seasonal migration for earning, seasonal diseases and local treatment system and so on can be shared with the help of this tool.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- Cropping pattern.
- Months of busy and slack season.
- Food deficiency period.
- Fooding habit.
- Seasonal disease and local treatment system.
- Festivals with expenses.
- Months of fruit and vegetable yielding.
- Major problems in different months, etc.

## Process:

Twelve different months are drawn on the ground and the community members are encouraged to show different activity and its month-wise involvement. The locally available materials are used, while doing this exercise, as far as possible, which helps to encourage for participation.



A specimen of a seasonal calendar



Illiterate women discussing cropping calendar



Adolescent girls discussing seasonality

## K. Power structure diagram

This tool can be used to describe the relationship between individuals, power structures, and institutions and outside agencies. Circles are used to represent people, groups and institution. People arrange these to represent degrees of power and relationships to that power.

**Information to be shared/collected:**
- The prominent figures in the community
- The institutions / organisations within and outside the community
- The relationship between / among the individual leaders and organisations
- Power structures in the community and relationship among the power centres.

**Process:**

The facilitator gives some specific situation like what do people do when they want a credit or in times of trouble? Thus, the exercise proceeds and another question will be raised as per necessary.



Workshop participants doing a role-play to analyze the power structure in the society: exercise done in Chuo University, Tokyo

Nepal's power structure (political): prepared using Venn/power structure diagram made in February 2006
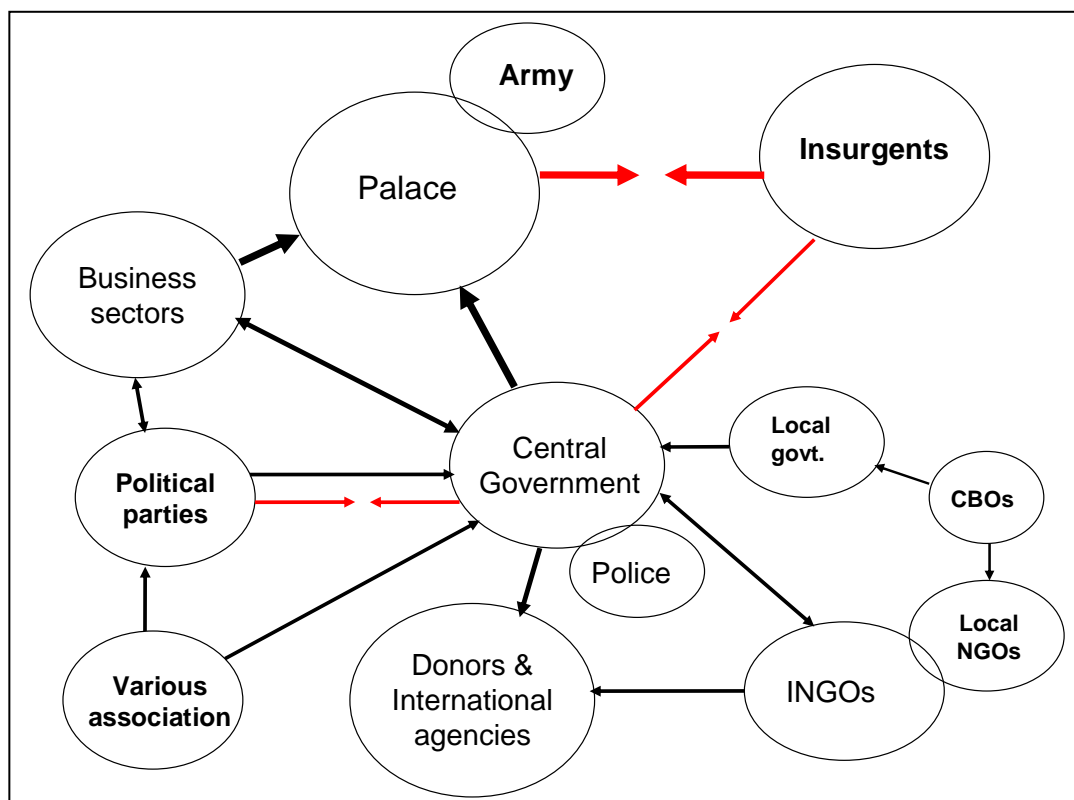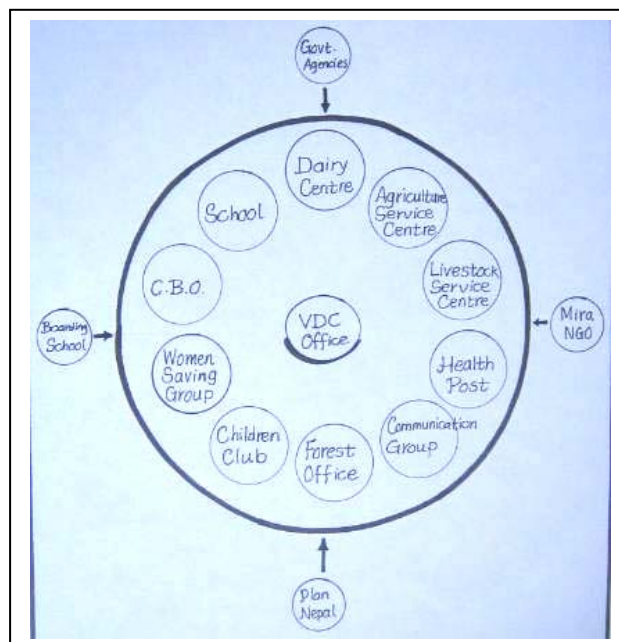
## L. Institutional diagram

Institution diagram helps to find out the existing institutions in the community and the institutions, located outside the community, providing supports to the village people. Service providing process of each institution is also discussed.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

- Existing institutions in the community (name and types).
- Institutions, located outside the community, but supporting to the villagers.
- Relationship among the institutions.
- Service providing process.

**Process:**

- Make a circle that indicates a community where the exercise is being done.
- Ask to indicate the institutions within the community. Those institutions will be indicated within the circle.
- Ask to point out the institutions, which are supporting the villagers from outside the community.
- Discuss the service providing process of each institution.
- Discuss the relationship among the institutions.



An example of institutional diagram
exercised in Kavre village of Nepal

## M. Semi-structure Interview

### Introduction:

Instead of using pre-set questionnaire method simply refer to a checklist and build in dialogue more to the interest and expression of the respondent which of course ensures quality, interest and intrinsic information sharing opportunity as well. Actually, this is guided interviewing and listening in which only some of the questions and topics are predetermined, and questions are raised during the interview. Many questions will be formulated during the interview, and irrelevant questions can be dropped. Questions are raised according to a flexible checklist or guide and not from a format questionnaire.

### Information to be collected/shared:

- It should be finalised by the facilitator as per the information required.

### Process:

If one would like to use this tool for getting information on local treatment system, s/he simply begins by what are the treatment system and how has it been practised here and how is it being changed over the years and what do the informant feel about it?



A facilitator interviewing a farmer at Kyushu, Japan



A facilitator learning from a villager about the village life in a village in Nara, Japan

## N. Focus Group Discussion

**Introduction:**

This is an especial theme discussion with homogeneous group or the similar interest group. The discussion is focused in a particular subject with the concerned members or victim. Experiences show that, the size of group members of six to 12 is regarded very effective. More than 12 will be difficult for handling the discussion. Likewise, participation of less than 6 cannot create many more ideas. However, this should not be taken as a formula.

**Information to be shared/collected:**

- It should be finalised by the facilitator as per the information required.

**Process:**

- Explain the objectives of the exercise.
- Raise the issue.
- Let participate all the members to put their opinion.
- Help to draw the lessons and make conclusion.
- Share the outcomes of the discussions.


Women discussing their issues
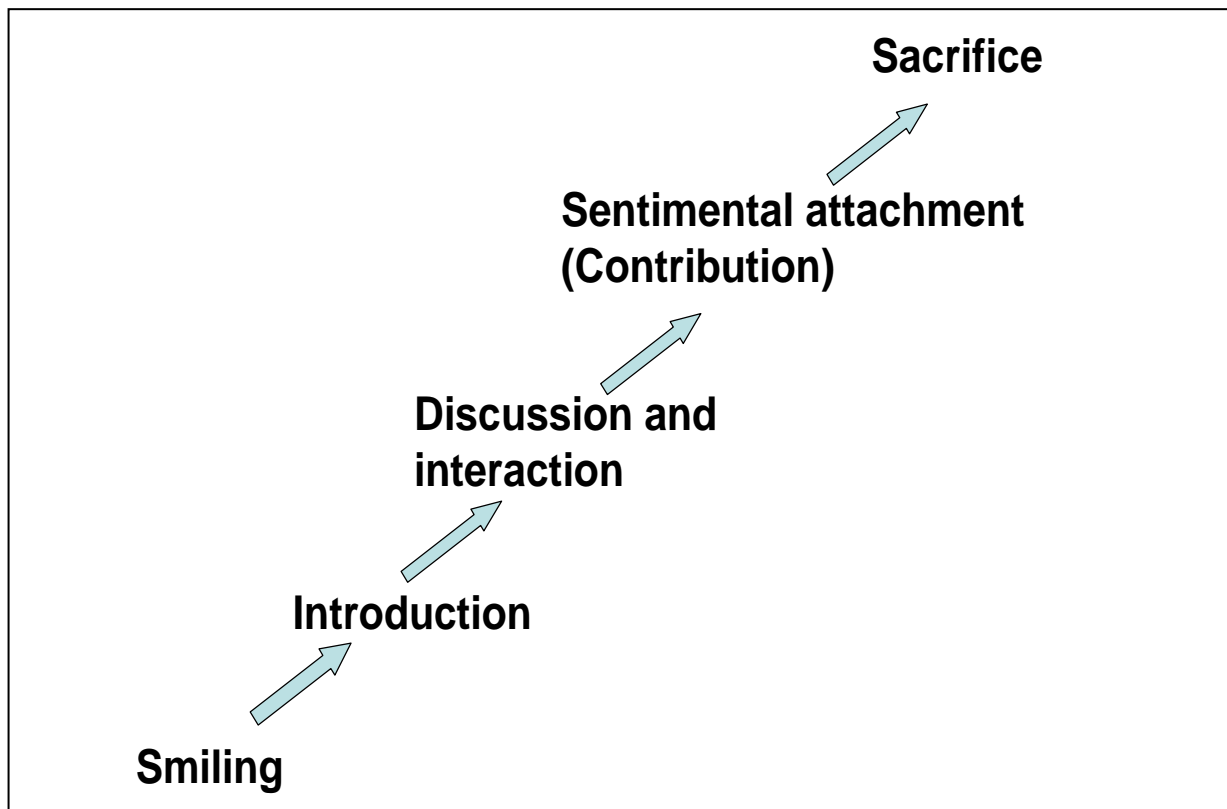
## Participatory project cycle

The following process is followed to develop a project in participatory manner:

    **A. Preparation**: Logistic preparation, orientation to facilitators, etc.

    **B. Immersion**: Visit to community, rapport building with local people.

    **C. Situation assessment**: Understanding community situation, learn from the people.

    **D. Planning**: Planning development programmes for the change in the society.

    **E. Resource management**: Discussion for resource management with local people to implement the planned development projects.

    **F. Implementation**: Implementation of development activities.

    **G. Evaluation**: To assess the impacts of the project.
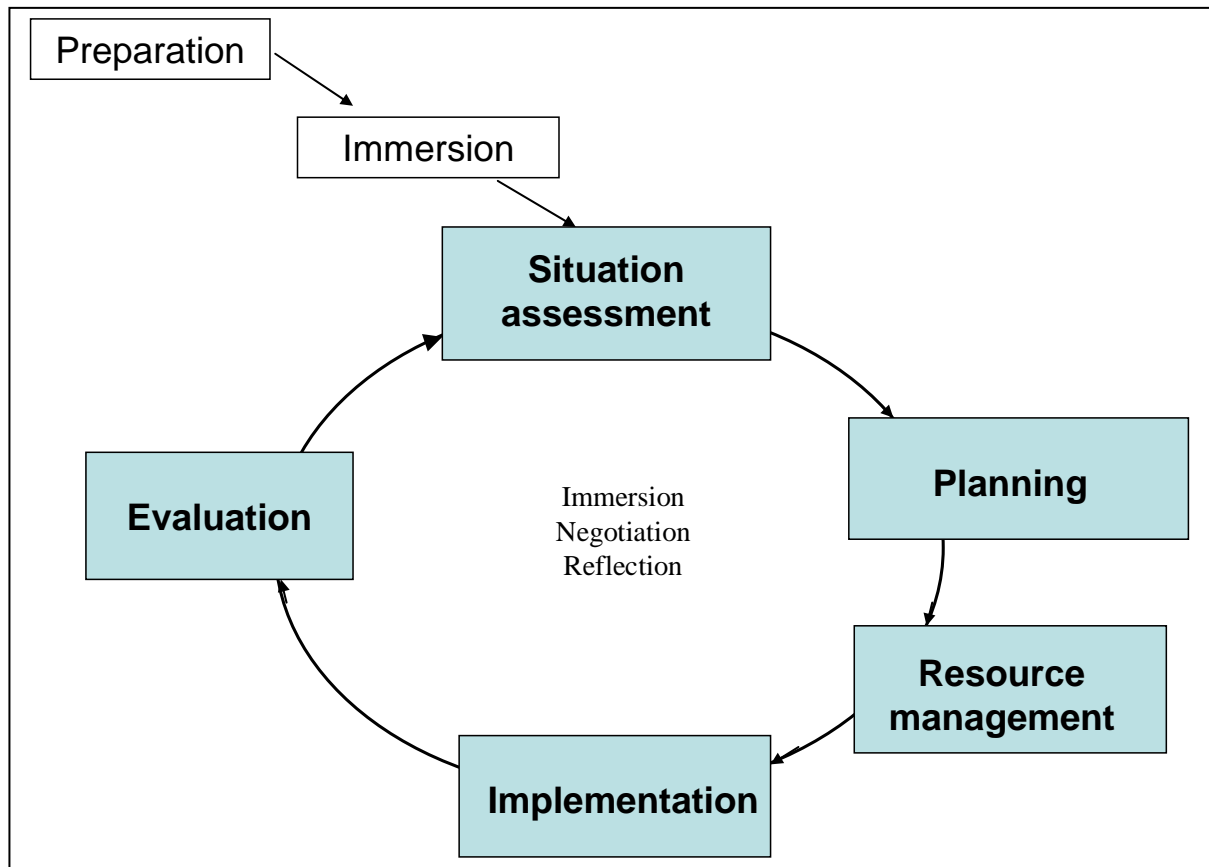
**Immersion process**

Facilitations must have good immersion with local people to work in partnership with them. The following diagram shows the level of immersion.

**Sacrifice**

**Sentimental attachment (Contribution)**

**Discussion and interaction**

**Introduction**

**Smiling**

Suggestions to facilitators:
- Facilitators need to reach, at least, interaction level of immersion in order to work together with local people.
- If they have sentimental attachment, the level of participation of both sides will be much higher and it will support to bring the work they do collectively into success.

**Introduction:**

- Helping people to discuss and find the ways for betterment.
- Making process easy to achieve the goal.
- Helping to bring some results.
- Sharing happiness with the people/participants.

**Role of facilitators:**

- Help participants to work together.
- Support to find the ways for the results.
- Share experiences.
- Handle the conflict when necessary.
- Make the process easy and fun.
- Set the climate for participatory discussion and exercises.
- Encourage participants for effective participation.

**Facilitators should not:**

- Impose any ideas.
- Have biasness.
- Take one's side.
- Get angry.
- Lead the process.
- Make decision.
- Be rigid about the process and methods to be used.

**Facilitators must be aware of:**

- Objectives of the workshop.
- Expected outcomes/results from the workshop/exercise
- Number of participants taking part in the workshop
- Background of the participants
- Location (venue) of the workshop
- History/profile of organization (who organizes the workshop)

**Suggestions to facilitators:**

- Ask open-ended questions (no close questions)
- Give examples while asking questions.
- Use visual methods.
- Divide into groups if some cannot express their feelings in group.
- Embrace errors and do not hesitate to say 'sorry' if anything goes wrong.
- Read the situation: what is going on
- Use your best judgments at all the times.
- Sentimentally attach with the people.

**Facilitators should be aware beforehand:**

- Diversity among the participants (in the community or..)
- Existing discriminations
- Leadership pattern.
- Potential risks to be faced during facilitation.
- Hindering factors for participation.
- Supporting factors for participation.
- Local costumes/cultures

**Necessary qualities to be a facilitator:**

| **Attitude** | **Concept** | **Skills** |
|---|---|---|
| • Positive thinking<br>• Appreciating participants' ideas<br>• Believe in people's capabilities<br>• Committed to social change<br>• Respect local cultures<br>• Open minded<br>• High learning attitude<br>• Flexible<br>• Sensitive<br>• Etc. | • Comprehensive development understanding<br>• Participation and participatory approach<br>• People centred development<br>• Power structure in the society<br>• Project cycle and management<br>• Conflict management<br>• Technical knowledge of concerned subject, etc. | • Communication & mobilization<br>• Listening skills<br>• Social analysis<br>• Using participatory tools<br>• Effective body language<br>• Team work/ management<br>• Negotiation<br>• Conflict management<br>• Leadership, etc. |

**Reference:**

1. Chambers, R., (1997), *Whose realities counts? Putting the first last*, IT Publications, London.
2. Constitution of Nepal (1991), Kathmandu.
3. Hope, A., and Timmel, S. (1996), *Training for Transformation*, MAMBO Press, Zimbawe.
4. Mikkelsen, B. (2005), *Methods for Development Work and Research: A new guide for practitioners*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
5. Mosse, D. (2002) *'People's Knowledge', Participation and Patronage: Operations and Representations in Rural Development*, in Kothari U. and Bill Cooke (ed.) *Participation: The New Tyranny*?, Zed Books, London.
6. Oakley, P., (1990), *Evaluating Social Development Projects*, OXFAM, London.
7. OXFORD Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
8. Rahnema, M. (2000) *Participation in Development Dictionary* (ed.), Orient Longman, New Delhi.
9. Phuyal, K., (1997), *Participatory Rural Appraisal: concept and practice* (in Nepali language), NEPAN, Kathmandu.
10. PLA Notes, (various issues), IIED, London.
11. Pretty, J. et all (1996), *Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide*, IIED, London.