UNIT 24 PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

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24.1 INTRODUCTION

“The Participative process aims to increase the use of evaluation results through the involvement of intended users in the design and administration of program evaluations. Participants may also share responsibility for the evaluation report with an external evaluator”

– (Smits and Champagne, 2004; Turnbull, 1999)

The Participatory Approach is an important guide for Community Development interventions. It enables people to reap benefits and reduces costs for development entailed through a top-down approach. The people are directly involved in and take ownership in decision-making processes. It aims at bottom-up, community-driven, empowering, educative initiatives liberating the vulnerable groups particularly in rural areas. It aligns with bottom-up, community-driven, needs-based approaches. It also stresses partnerships, collaborations and shared ownership in order to usher in development through a bottom-up approach.

Participatory planning is an urban or rural planning paradigm that emphasizes involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes of urban planning or, community-level planning processes, urban or rural. It is often considered as part of community development. A participatory approach is needed in gender planning which leads to the development of the whole nation. Gender planning prioritizes the needs and conditions in which women live and work as a site for change. It involves a critical analysis of the gaps between women’s and men’s access to economic, social, political and cultural resources. This analysis enables the development of policy initiatives to correct the imbalances – including cases where men are not benefiting equally from the development planning approaches currently in use. Gender planning should not be seen as a separate, parallel process to mainstream development planning but should transform mainstream planning to address the needs of women and poor people generally through an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable process.

This Unit helps to understand the participatory approach (its origin, principles and advantages); community involvement and mainstreaming gender in the planning process through a participatory approach.

24.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept of ‘participatory approach’ and its significance in the context of a gender perspective;
- describe general principles of the participatory approach in planning, implementing and monitoring;
- explain the methods, approaches, and different means of the participatory approach;
- analyze the advantages and challenges of participatory approaches; and
- explain the participatory approach in gender planning.

24.3 ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

At first in the UN Habitat document “Building Bridges through Participatory Planning”, Fred Fisher, president of the International Development Institute for
Participatory Processes in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

Organization and Management, identifies Participatory Reflection and Action as the leading school of participatory planning. He identifies Paulo Freire and Kurt Lewin as key pioneers, as well as claiming planning fathers Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford as participatory planners. Freire’s belief that poor and exploited people can and should be, enabled to analyze their own reality was a fundamental inspiration for the participatory planning movement. Lewin’s relevance lay in his integration of democratic leadership, group dynamics, experiential learning, action research and open systems theory and his efforts to overcome racial and ethnic injustices.

In general, PRA has been supplanted by Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), which emphasizes the links between the participatory process and action. Related work has been done on community-based participatory research (CBPR).

24.4 PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION (PLA)

PLA, in a nutshell, refers to a way to help people to participate together in learning and then act on that learning. PLA is a growing family of approaches, tools, attitudes and behaviours to enable and empower people to present, share, analyze and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate, reflect and scale-up community action.

Anyone who is willing to “give it a go” can use PLA. The tools are flexible and adaptable; they can be used with different types of people, in different situations and for different purposes. PLA is especially useful for helping those who are the most vulnerable and weaker sections in the community. Those who are trying to reduce the social or economic impact of any problem in the community will involve themselves in PLA. Additionally, PLA can also be used by those who wish to influence government policy and programmes. Although they are most often used with communities, PLA tools can also be used to help communities, organizations and government institutions to analyze, plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect together. In this way, PLA provides a very effective means to mobilize communities to address any issue or problem.

24.5 STAGES AND PROCESS OF PLA

PLA can be used at every stage of community mobilization. It can help you to get a community together to address issues and problems, analyze a situation together, decide what needs doing together, make plans, act on those plans, check on how those actions are going, evaluate those actions and reflect on what needs to be done next.

PLA can be used in both rural and urban settings and rich and poor areas. It has been used in both northern and southern countries. PLA is best used wherever people feel most comfortable discussing the issues and problems. This may be in formal workshops, offices, church meetings or health facilities or in informal meeting places such as bars, people’s homes or under a shady tree.

PLA is guided by a facilitator, who helps people to use the tools and ensure that everyone is able to participate equally. As such, people facilitating PLA need to adopt the right attitudes and behaviours to become a facilitator. PLA activities also need to be carefully planned. PLA has been evolving since the 1970s. Many different ways to do PLA have been developed. These vary according to who they are being used with, where and for what purpose. Although the methods of PLA may change, they all have the same principles. Together, these principles make up the PLA approach.
24.6 PRINCIPLES OF PLA IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

This section explores the key principles of PLA and their application during the processes of planning, implementing and monitoring.

**Participation:** All people have a right to play an active and influential part in shaping the decisions which affect their lives. Often vulnerable and weaker sections of people are not fully included in the process of local action on the issues affecting them, even though it is they who have to live with the outcomes of a programme. People who use PLA approaches believe that weaker and vulnerable people should participate together at every stage of local action on planning, implementing and monitoring. Those who use PLA also believe that the people should not just participate actively, but also influentially. This means that the views and opinions of people are not just listened to, but also heard. Their voices should have the power to shape and control local actions. There are different types of participation and not all of these types will allow people to actively and influentially shape decisions which affect their lives.

**Table 24.1: Types of community participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Community Control</th>
<th>Types of Participation</th>
<th>Level of Sustainability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td><strong>Self-mobilization:</strong> Affected communities start action on issues without outside help.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Joint decision-making:</strong> Affected communities and organizations make decisions together on an equal basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Functional participation:</strong> Affected communities are invited to participate at a particular stage of action to fulfil a particular purpose.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td><strong>Participation for Material Incentives:</strong> Affected communities participate in an activity only because they need the material benefit of doing so, e.g. money</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Consultation:</strong> Affected communities are asked about an activity by an organization, but their views may or may not have any influence on it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Information giving:</strong> People are simply informed that an activity will take place and have no say in activity design or management.</td>
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PLA is designed to help people to participate in joint decision-making with organizations. It can also help them to self-mobilize to address issues. This increases the level of community control over an activity. It also increases the likelihood that the activity will be kept going by the community after the organization has left.

**Valuing local knowledge and experience:** People living in a particular community in a particular way have expert knowledge of how an issue affects their community
and way of life. It is this expert knowledge which organizations value. Local people often know a lot more about how an issue affects their lives than outside organizations think they do.

A commitment to empowerment: Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2003).

In order to feel empowered to address issues affecting individuals, communities and organizations, there is need to strengthen four types of power:

**Resource power** – access to and influence over, resources to deal with issues.

**Knowledge power** – an understanding of how to cope with the issues and problems.

**Positional power** – the ability to negotiate rights and entitlements and fulfill responsibilities and obligations to cope with the issues and problems.

**Personal power** – a sense of self-esteem and self-worth, a personal realization and motivation to claim resource, knowledge and positional power to cope with issues and problems.

*Source: Tools Together Now (100 participatory tools to mobilize communities for HIV/AIDS), International Alliance Project www.aidalliance.org.*

All people have at least some power. PLA approaches aim to make full use of the power found in communities and to strengthen it further in order to empower people and organizations to address issues together.

**Group analysis and learning:** It is only through people and organizations working closely together that a full understanding of a situation can come about and the most appropriate action can be taken.

Through people sharing their knowledge and experience of issues in groups, the full complexity of the situation can be understood. Participants can also see both the diversity of experience and knowledge as well as what they share. Group analysis also leads to debate and discussion on issues and this can increase the group’s motivation to take action on the problems, needs and issues.

**Using a mixture of visual and verbal techniques:** Through diagrams, drawings and shared experiences, all people are able to take part in complex analyses and learning on an equal basis.

Using visual tools allows people to take part in analysis and planning at a level at which they are comfortable. Such tools allow them to engage in complex analysis regardless of age, gender, culture, literacy level, social or economic status.

PLA also uses performing arts (such as drama and role play) to encourage people to express themselves in a way in which they feel comfortable. Both are accompanied by sensitive questioning and facilitation. Therefore, visual and verbal
techniques complement each other. More important than the tool itself is the way in which people are encouraged to voice their opinions and feel heard.

**Actively seeking the unheard voice:** The weaker sections/vulnerable people who normally do not have an opportunity to have a say in decisions (for any reason) are actively sought out and included in planning, implementing and monitoring action.

Sometimes people simply do not want to have a voice in certain decisions and this must be respected. But, at other times, people are either intentionally or unintentionally excluded from having a say in decisions which affect their lives. This might be because of age, gender, sexuality, status, class, caste, level of literacy, social or economic status, where they live or any number of other reasons.

It is often those who have least say in decisions affecting their lives who are most affected or vulnerable – for example, the poor, people who live in remote areas, AIDS orphans, women, migrants or displaced people, people who are stigmatized or discriminated against because of their status. A principle of PLA is that those affected or vulnerable who want to have a say should have a say. So those facilitating PLA will actively try to find out who wants to participate but are being excluded and then try to include them. In this way, weaker and vulnerable people are able to take action to cope with it.

**Emphasizing right attitudes and behaviours**

For all affected people to participate actively and influentially in action, people facilitating PLA must develop attitudes and behaviours that include rather than exclude all people. It is not good enough just to include marginalized and excluded people in action. What is more important is how we include them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirable Attitudes and Behaviours in Facilitating the Participatory Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Trust people so that they can analyze, plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Do not lecture or dominate people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Listen to people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Learn from people and share your own knowledge as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Do not judge people, but do challenge harmful ideas to help people see things in a new way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Respect people and be friendly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Be honest with people about intentions and expected outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Embrace error and learn from mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Have fun!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Do not rush; let things evolve at their own pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Relax with people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Do not work for people; work with them. Better still be with them.</td>
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</table>

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

**Note:**

i) Use this space given below to answers the questions.

ii) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) State the four types of power to be built in order to bring empowerment.
2) Define PLA.

24.7 PARTICIPATORY APPROACH FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

PLA tools are aimed at helping organizations, groups and communities to address issues and problems together. PLA can be used as a way to help individuals, communities and organizations to mobilize jointly towards addressing the issues and to fulfill the needs and demands of the people. Because of its commitment to participation and seeking the ‘unheard voice’, it is also a very effective method to get hard-to-reach or hidden individuals or groups to participate in planning, implementing and monitoring the projects and programmes.

The Participatory Approach can also help to:

- **Empower people** – to become ‘makers and shapers’ of their own lives, communities and services; PLA achieves this through increasing people’s knowledge power, personal power, resource power and positional power;
- **Increase the effectiveness of projects** – because they can be ‘tailored’ by a specific community or group to their own specific needs;
- **Increase the efficiency of projects** – because more minds and materials are brought to bear on an issue;
- **Increase accountability between stakeholders** – through people being more aware of each other’s roles and responsibilities;
- **Build trust** – between different people and organizations in a community;
- **Increase ownership and control** – PLA can help give people a sense of ownership of a project and a sense of control over their own lives;
- **Increase sustainability** – because people learn new knowledge and skills during PLA which allow them to carry on assessing, planning and acting to address issues of the people; and
- **Enable people to claim their human rights** – participation is not just a good thing to do, it is a fundamental human right; PLA can also help people to claim their rights towards their development.

24.8 METHODS AND APPROACHES OF PRA AND PLA

We have recapitulated some of the key methods and approaches of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and participatory Learning and Action (PLA) in this section.
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- Do-it-yourself: Local people as experts and teachers and outsiders as novices;
- Local analysis of secondary sources;
- Mapping and modeling;
- Time lines and trend and change analysis;
- Seasonal calendars;
- Daily time-use analysis;
- Institutional diagramming;
- Matrix scoring and ranking;
- Shared presentations and analysis and
- Participatory planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring.

We use PRA and PLA in this planning process. During this process we try to answering the following questions:

i) What are the resources?
ii) What is desired to be achieved?
iii) How should it be achieved and
iv) What is actually achieved?

This implies monitoring, feedback, evaluation and modification and readjustments.

Planning of resources was introduced to achieve planned development to ensure rapid progress and equitable distribution of the fruits of progress. For this purpose it was necessary to lay emphasis on minimum needs of people, creation of infrastructure and employment, production of essential equipment and materials and to reduce dependence on foreign countries by making the country self-sufficient and self-reliant.

24.9 ADVANTAGES OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

The important advantages of a participatory approach include:

- Participatory evaluation is an inclusive process, which fosters positive involvement of all stakeholders in the project.
- Results are measured during the project, allowing for evaluation of changes over the life of the project, not just results at the end.
- The path of the project can be altered or improved in response to on-going measurement of results, thus improving the final result.
- Collaboration is furthered through the process of Participatory Approach evaluation and the community ends up with skills that they did not have before (capacity building).
- Results from different projects in different communities can be compared and measured.

24.10 CHALLENGES OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

We are often impressed with the potential of a participatory approach. However, serious challenges can confront those who adopt such an approach.
Participatory Processes in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

The following list illustrates some of the major challenges.

- Not all participants have the same power. Ensuring that all sections of the community are able to participate is a challenge for participatory planning. Some approaches, such as Community-Based Planning, separate the community into concerned groups so that the livelihoods and preferred outcomes of different social groups can be identified.

- Many experiences with Participatory Reflection and Action and participatory planning suffer from a lack of follow-up. PRA has often not been part of a system, but an ad-hoc process. Community-Based Planning has tried to overcome this by linking planning to the mainstream local government planning system.

- Another challenge is caused by a lack of funds to actually implement the plans, which can lead to participation fatigue and frustration among communities. For example, in the social-investment funds supported by the World Bank, participatory planning is often the first step, often leading to planning of infrastructure.

- Some methods for evaluation will be new for some participants while being familiar for others.

- Different participants know more about different parts of the project. So it can take more time to work together.

- Participants may not have a clear idea of what they need and want from the project and evaluation.

- It is easier to measure how many people participated than what difference their participation made.

- Results from multiple communities need to be added up and compared.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note:  

i) Use this space given below to answer the question.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) List the advantages of the participatory approach.

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24.11 APPLICATIONS OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

How can we apply participatory approaches? This section highlights a range of applications in planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and policies.
24.11.1 Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making and a type of participatory democracy, in which stakeholders in the community decide how to allocate part of a budget. Participatory budgeting allows people to identify, discuss and prioritize public spending projects.

Participatory budgeting is usually characterized by several basic design features: identification of spending priorities by community members, election of budget delegates to represent different communities, facilitation and technical assistance by public employees, local and higher level assemblies to deliberate and vote on spending priorities and the implementation of local direct-impact community projects.

Various studies have suggested that participatory budgeting results in more equitable public spending, higher quality of life, increased satisfaction of basic needs, greater government transparency and accountability, increased levels of public participation (especially by marginalized or poorer residents) and democratic and citizenship learning.

24.11.2 Public Participation

Public participation is a political principle or practice and may also be recognized as a right (right to public participation). The term public participation may be used interchangeably with the concept or practice of stakeholder engagement, and/or, popular participation.

Generally public participation seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. The principle of public participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. Public participation implies that the public's contribution will influence the decision. Public participation may be regarded as a way of empowerment and as a vital part of democratic governance.

In the context of knowledge management, the establishment of ongoing participatory processes is seen in the facilitation of collective intelligence and inclusiveness, shaped by the desire for the participation of the whole community or society.

Public participation is part of “people-centred” or “human centric” principles, which have emerged in Western culture over the last thirty years and has had some bearings on education, business, public policy and international relief and development programmes. Public participation is advanced by the humanist movements and in the context of post-modernism. Public participation may be advanced as part of a “people first” paradigm shift. In this respect, public participation may challenge the concept that “big is better” and the logic of centralized hierarchies, advancing alternative concepts of “more heads are better than one” and arguing that public participation can sustain productive and durable change.

24.11.3 Public Policy

In some countries public participation has become a central principle of public policy making. In the UK it has been observed that all levels of government have started to build citizen and stakeholder engagement into their policy-making processes. This may involve large-scale consultations, focus group research, online discussion forums or deliberative citizens’ juries. Public participation is viewed as a tool, intended to inform planning, organizing or funding of activities. Public participation may also be used to measure attainable objectives, evaluate impact and identify lessons for future practice.
In the USA public participation in administrative rulemaking refers to the process by which proposed rules are subject to public comment for a specified period of time. Public participation is typically mandatory for rules promulgated by executive agencies of the US government. Statutes or agency policies may mandate public hearings during this period.

24.11.4 Public Trust

In recent years loss of public trust in authorities and politicians has become a widespread concern in many democratic societies. Public participation is regarded as one potential solution to the crisis in public trust and governance, particularly in the UK, Europe and other democracies. The idea is that the public should be involved more fully in the policy process in that authorities seek public views and participation, instead of treating the public simply as passive recipients of policy decisions.

The underlying assumption by political theorists, social commentators and even politicians is that public participation increases public trust in authorities, improving citizen’s political efficacy, enhancing democratic ideals and even improving the quality of policy decisions. However, the assumed benefits of public participation are yet to be confirmed.

24.11.5 Accountability and Transparency

Public participation may also be viewed as accountability enhancing. The argument put forth is that public participation can be a means for the participating communities to hold public authorities accountable for implementation.

24.11.6 Participatory Development

In the economic development theory, the school of participatory development says that the desire to increase public participation in humanitarian aid and development has led to the establishment of numerous context-specific, formal methodologies, matrices, pedagogies and ad hoc approaches. These include conscientization and praxis; Participatory action research (PAR), rapid rural appraisal (RRA) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA); appreciation influence control analysis (AIC); “open space” approaches; objectives oriented project planning (ZOPP); vulnerability analysis and capacity analysis.

24.11.7 Environmental and Sustainable Development

In recent years public participation has come to be seen as a vital part of addressing environmental problems and bringing about sustainable development. In this context, the limits of solely relying on technocratic bureaucratic monopoly of decision making have been recognized. It is argued that public participation allows governments to adopt policies and enact laws that are relevant to communities and take into account their needs. Public participation is recognized as an environmental principle.

24.11.8 Right to Public Participation

In some jurisdictions the right to public participation is enshrined by law. The right to public participation may also be conceived of as a human right or as manifestation of the right to freedom of association and freedom of assembly.

As such, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, have public participation and freedom of information provisions in their legal systems since before the Middle Ages. Democracy and public participation are closely connected. Democratic societies have incorporated public participation rights into their laws for centuries. For example, in the US the right to petition has been part of the first Amendment
Management and Administration

of the US constitution since 1791. More recently, since the 1970s in New Zealand numerous laws (eg. health, local government, environmental management) require government officials to “consult” those affected by a matter and take their views into consideration when making decisions.

Effective public participation depends on the public having access to accurate and comprehensive information. Hence, laws regarding public participation often deal with the issue of the right to know, access of information and freedom of information. The right to participation may also be advanced in the context of equality and group rights, meant to ensure equal and full participation of a designated group in society.

24.11.9 People’s Participation

People’s participation means participation of people in the administrative process. It implies citizen’s control over administration or public influence on administration. It is essential for the smooth and effective performance of the administrative machinery. It makes the administration responsive to the needs of the people. It secures public support to the government policies and makes them a success. It constitutes an important means of enforcing administrative accountability.

A democratic government is based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty which means that the people are supreme in a democracy. The final authority in democracy is vested in the people. Therefore, administration in democracy is or should finally and ultimately be responsible to the people. It is in this context that the people’s participation in administration assumes importance. It transfers the representative democracy into participatory democracy. It facilitates the bottom-up rule. People’s participation in administration can be studied under two heads – participation in general administration and participation in development administration.

Participation in General Administration

The people cannot generally have a definite and regular influence on administration. Hence, the public influence on the administrative process is mainly indirect and informal. However, there are certain formal modes of people's participation in administration. They are:

- Election;
- Recall;
- Pressure groups;
- Advisory committees; and
- Public opinion.

Participation in Development Administration

People’s participation in development administration means the direct involvement of people in the process of administering development programmes meant for bringing about socio-economic changes in the society. It embraces the following dimensions:

- Participation in decision making;
- Participation in implementation;
- Participation in monitoring and evaluation; and
- Participation in sharing benefits.

People participate in development administration through various mechanisms like Panchayati Raj institutions, cooperative institutions, Mahila Mandals, farmer’s service societies, Yuvak Kendras and other voluntary/non-governmental organizations.
Advantages of People's Participation in Development Administration

Some of the advantages of people’s participation in development administration include:

- It provides administration a wealth of information on local socio-cultural, economic, ecological and technical conditions. This information is highly useful in the process of planning, programming and implementation of development programmes.

- It leads to the selection of those projects which are of direct relevance to the people.

- It facilitates mobilization of local resources in the form of cash, labour, materials and so on which are very essential for the programme’s success.

- It acts as a safeguard against the abuse of administrative authority and thus reduces the scope for corruption in the operation of programmes.

- It prevents the hijacking of programme benefits by richer and powerful sections due to the direct involvement of poorer and weaker sections of the society. Thus, it leads to the equitable distribution of benefits.

- It makes the local community easily accept the developmental change and encourages them to be more tolerant towards mistakes and failures.

- It reduces the financial burden on government by sustaining the programmes even after the withdrawal of its support. They can be managed by the volunteers or community – based workers.

- It enhances the ability and competence of the people to assume responsibility and solve their own problems. It develops a spirit of self-reliance, initiative and leadership among the people.

- It strengthens grassroots democracy.

Factors Limiting the Degree and Effectiveness of People's Participation in Administration

We now list some of the factors which limit the degree and effectiveness of people’s participation in administration.

a) Aristocratic and mechanical bureaucracy;

b) Unfavourable socio-economic environment like casteism, communalism, poverty, illiteracy and so on;

c) Negative political interference;

d) Time constraints, that is, time bound nature of the programme;

e) Role of middlemen and sycophants;

f) Corruption and low standards of conduct in administration;

g) Faulty administrative procedures; and

h) Lack of participative culture.

24.12 LESSONS LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN PLANNING

Participatory approaches have been employed in planning in different contexts. What are the lessons learned? This section summarizes important lessons.
1) **Access to information, tools and training**

Proponents need information, tools and training to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participatory approach (PA).

2) **Multi-stakeholder involvement**

Involving all levels of community (seniors, youth, businesses, rich, poor etc.) and other stakeholder groups (NGOs, government agencies, education/academic institutions) increases creativity, access to resources, expertise and solutions.

3) **Flexible timelines and funding arrangements**

Flexible funding supports face-to-face meetings necessary to foster partnership development and commitment by all participants, especially the rural people.

4) **Personal rather than institutional relationships**

Personal involvement increases levels of trust and willingness to engage and cooperate; fosters ownership and generates empowerment.

5) **Strong leadership and coordination**

6) **Open and strong communication**

The participatory approach requires strong and open communication between partners, proponents, community members and coordinators.

7) **Mutual benefits**

PA reduces barriers and demonstrates mutual benefits rather than competing for scarce resources; emphasizes partners instead of competitors.

8) **Community mobilization**

PA results in strong ties between participants, increased by enthusiasm and mobilization of community to create change.

### 24.13 LESSONS LEARNED FROM EVALUATION: THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH MODEL

Some of the major lessons drawn from experience have been summarized in this section.

1) **Time factor**

It is important to accommodate input from multiple participants and allow for participants to understand PA evaluation and develop an evaluation process (e.g., suitable language: ‘evaluation’ to ‘valuing’).

2) **Community applicability and utility**

PA evaluation ensures results are useful to the community as participants from the community are developing and implementing their own evaluation.

3) **Evaluation as learning not simply accountability**

Evaluation is revealed as a way to value and improve one's work, not as a measure of failure/success that may lead to denial of resources.

4) **Streamlined and simplified reporting**

Less complicated reporting systems (suggestions of a universal streamlined reporting system) may be adopted.
5) **Tools and support for PA**

Streamlined and simplified participatory evaluation (universal) guidelines, early PA and evaluation training and ongoing PA and evaluation support are important inputs.

6) **Pre-planned exit strategies and follow-up**

Exit and follow-up strategies need to be planned in advance. Follow-up after cessation of funding; analysis and communication plan before the implementation of the model need to be elaborated.

7) **Consistent government and personal involvement**

Consistent involvement of stakeholders would emphasize on-going communication with proponents; contingencies for staff turnover and personal involvement.

8) **Community impacts/outcomes**

Attribution of community-level impacts/outcomes to model activities may be tenuous.

This requires more time for community-level contributions.

9) **Baseline data and instruments**

Semi-structured, consistent and ongoing data collection (qualitative and quantitative) capturing stories and facilitating analysis, comparability and roll-up. It makes a balance between community needs and needs of programme evaluation.

10) **Evidence-based analysis plan**

At the outset, a clear and evidence-based plan for analysis of information from proponents, including roles and responsibilities of analysts is important.

11) **Integrated programme and policy goals**

Analysis and results must be linked to overall goals of programme and policy.

### 24.14 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring is an ongoing process of data collection that allows project managers and the community to examine positive and negative trends and readjust their strategies accordingly. Monitoring focuses on measuring outputs – process and products related to the project implementation. It is done on a regular basis throughout the life of a project and helps ensure that the project stays on track. One way to monitor a project is to track process indicators or output indicators. In practical terms, monitoring and evaluation are very similar. In fact, monitoring is sometimes referred to as “on-going evaluation.” Both monitoring and evaluation can be conducted using the same methods, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Making Monitoring and Evaluation "Participatory"**

While monitoring and evaluation of development projects have traditionally been done for the benefit of government, donors or sponsoring agencies, the main goal of participatory monitoring and evaluation is to build the community’s capacity to track the progress of its own development. Data are collected about the progress of activities so that the community can make its own decisions about:
Community members are the key players and decision-makers in the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation process, although this does not exclude outsiders from the government, sponsoring agency or donors. On the contrary, successful Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation requires support from the highest levels of these organizations. Staff of the programmes and projects only play an advisory role, however, and leave the actual monitoring to the community members.

24.15 IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the most challenging aspects of planning is implementing the plan – getting “what is on paper” to “come to life” and achieving the goals and strategies included in the plan. Work for successful implementation of a plan needs to begin when work on the plan begins and continues through the implementation.

Communicate: Organizational communication about the plan and the planning process needs to start as soon as the planning process is determined. While sharing a detailed planning process right at the start may not be possible, you may be able to let people know the reasons why the organization is beginning the process to develop a plan, how the plan will be used within the organization and what the impact of having a longer-term plan will be on the organization and the nature of the task to be accomplished.

Engage: All or representative groups of constituents within and outside the organization should be involved during the planning process. Their inputs should be sought and collated. There are many ways to do this – face to face town meetings or focus group discussions, surveys, task forces on specific issues or topics or involving a large group in the actual drafting of the plan. The best fit will be determined by the culture and size of the organization.

Align: An effective plan cannot be developed in a vacuum. Be aware of trends in your field, the environment you work in and the direction of any larger organization the implementing unit belongs to. It has to be ensured that the resulting strategies and goals of a plan are aligned with any higher level organizational goals.

24.16 PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN GENDER PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Gender planning prioritizes the needs and conditions in which women live and work as a site for change. It involves a critical analysis of the gaps between women’s and men’s access to economic, social, political and cultural resources. This analysis enables the development of policy initiatives to correct the imbalances – including cases where men are not benefiting equally from the development planning approaches currently in use.

Gender planning should not be seen as a separate, parallel process to mainstream development planning but should transform mainstream planning to address the needs of women and poor people generally through an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable process. The planning process should be located in an equality base where men and women will be benefited equally without any discrimination.
Gender-aware policy planning, implementing and monitoring are important tools to effect a positive change in women’s conditions. Gender-aware policies and plans are more likely to respond to deep seated patterns of discrimination against women when women themselves collectively analyze and contribute to policy-making and planning processes. In cases where men are not benefiting equally from development planning strategies, a gender-aware approach enables interventions to correct the imbalance. There are usually four major planning cycles through which most developing countries seek to respond to national needs and issues. These are: the macro/sectoral policy cycle, the budget cycle, the aid cycle and the project cycle. These cycles when brought together through a planning process usually reflect a government’s medium term (5-10 year period) expenditure plan. In establishing macro policy frameworks, gender analysis and outputs need to be included to ensure effective policies which address the needs of all sectors of the population by getting views and approaches from each and every section. Approaches to policy-making which influence gender outcomes can be categorized in three types: gender-neutral, gender-specific and gender aware/redistributive/transformative. Generally, policy and programme interventions could fall within a welfare, equity or transformation/empowerment approach.

A welfare approach usually responds to meeting the practical needs of women (gender-specific), whereas a transformative approach responds to meeting strategic needs (gender-transformative). The potential of gender policy to transform gender relations and the gender-biased distribution of resources is greatly enhanced if that policy is developed through a participatory process involving key decision-makers within the department concerned and in other related sectors, as well as with the groups and communities the policy is intended to benefit. In the preparation of a gender-aware medium-term development plan, ‘engendered’ inputs from the macro and sectoral policy planning cycles can be combined to produce a medium-term plan of expenditure which then informs the preparation of annual budget expenditures. These then feed into the project cycles in the various sectors.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note:  i) Use this space given below to answer the question.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) Discuss the key features of any one approach of participatory planning.

24.18 SUMMING UP

This Unit started with defining the concept of ‘participatory approach’ and its significance in the context of a gender perspective. Also, the Unit described general principles of the participatory approach in planning, implementing and monitoring and explained the methods and approaches, different participatory approaches. We have also analyzed the advantages and challenges of participatory approaches. The
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The last section dealt with application of the participatory approach in gender planning. Thus, in formulation of policies and programmes towards gender, development and equality, women and the other vulnerable groups have to participate in planning, implementation and monitoring. The general principles of PLA must be followed in all the stages of planning, implementing and monitoring incorporating sensitivity to a gender and development perspective.

24.19 GLOSSARY

Participatory Approach: The ‘power of knowledge’ arises from the process of participation. Thus, the professional monopoly of information used for planning and management is broken and a new local confidence is generated or reinforced. The external knowledge is locally assimilated.

Planning: Planning can be defined as a conscious effort on the part of any government to follow a definite pattern of economic development in order to promote rapid and fundamental change in the economy and society. Development planning is the process through which economic development is planned. Many countries, irrespective of their political ideology, use the process of development planning to achieve national goals.

Gender planning: Gender planning, as an approach, recognizes unequal relations between men and women but intervenes to change these patterns and symbolic codes. It seeks to address unequal gender relations which result in a skewed sexual division of labour, unequal access of women to basic resources, limited political representation of women in decision-making, a tacit acceptance of male violence against women and the continued subordination of women.

Gender-specific policies: A policy that is gender-specific takes into account gender differentials and targets women or men specifically, but leaves the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact.

Monitoring: Monitoring is an ongoing process of data collection that allows project managers and the community to examine positive and negative trends and readjust their strategies accordingly.

24.20 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Resource power – Access to and influence over, resources to deal with issues.

Knowledge power – An understanding of how to cope with the issues and problems.

Positional power – The ability to negotiate rights and entitlements and fulfill responsibilities and obligations to cope with the issues and problems.
Personal power – A sense of self-esteem and self-worth, a personal realization and motivation to claim resources, knowledge and positional power to cope with issues and problems.

2) PLA, in a nutshell, is a way to help people to participate together in learning and then act on that learning. PLA is a growing family of approaches, tools, attitudes and behaviours to enable and empower people to present, share, analyze and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate, reflect and scale-up community action.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- Participatory evaluation is an inclusive process, which fosters positive involvement of all stakeholders in the project.
- Results are measured during the project, allowing for evaluation of changes over the life of the project, not just results at the end.
- The path of the project can be altered or improved in response to on-going measurement of results, thus improving the final result.
- Collaboration is furthered through the process of Participatory Approach evaluation and the community ends up with skills that they did not have before (capacity building); and
- Results from different projects in different communities can be compared and measured.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Participatory Budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making and a type of participatory democracy, in which communities decide how to allocate part of a budget. Participatory budgeting allows citizens to identify, discuss and prioritize public spending projects.

Participatory budgeting is usually characterized by several basic design features: identification of spending priorities by community members, election of budget delegates to represent different communities, facilitation and technical assistance by public employees, local and higher level assemblies to deliberate and vote on spending priorities and the implementation of local direct-impact community projects.

Various studies have suggested that participatory budgeting results in more equitable public spending, higher quality of life, increased satisfaction of basic needs, greater government transparency and accountability, increased levels of public participation (especially by marginalized or poorer residents) and democratic and citizenship learning.

24.21 REFERENCES


24.22 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1) Discuss general principles of participatory approaches.

2) What are the different applications of the participatory approach in planning different programmes and policies?

3) Critically evaluate the process of the participatory approach in development planning and implementation.

4) Suggest ways and means to mainstream gender in planning, implementation and monitoring.

5) Trace the participatory approach for community mobilization in planning, implementing and monitoring.