
UNIT 7 TRAINING GROUPS

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Group Dynamics
- 7.3 Participatory Learning Methods (PALM)
- 7.4 Group Formation: SHGs and Cooperative Societies
- 7.5 Case Studies
- 7.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.7 Glossary
- 7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Although training can be imparted to individuals, it is generally organized for groups. Why? The reason is that training groups is more cost effective. But you know that there are other reasons too. Learning is better when there are people to interact with. In this Unit on training groups, we will try to answer the following questions. How are effective groups formed? What are the group dynamics? What happens when groups form and function? We will also learn about the advantages of working in small groups and large groups and also learn about group learning strategies that are most effective in conducting training programmes.

Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- define groups;
- describe the process of group formation;
- define self help groups;
- understand the role of self help groups;
- identify participatory learning methods (PALM);
- identify ways to use PALM in small group training situations; and
- identify situations for using participatory learning methods.

7.2 GROUP DYNAMICS

What happens when groups form and function? A group forms when two or more people come together and:

- have a common goal/objective;
- have a defined role;

- participate in attaining the objectives;
- are interdependent;
- share responsibility;
- practice a set of common norms and values; and
- identify themselves with the group.

Remember, when people are together and the characteristics listed above are missing, it is only a *crowd* not a group. Hence people on a railway platform form a crowd till there is an accident and everybody starts interacting with each other to help those who are involved in the accident.

How are groups formed?

Formation of a group may happen on its own or may be deliberate. We are more concerned with the latter. This kind of group formation always starts with a common objective. Trainees who come together for training have one goal — training, even though they are all from different backgrounds and are not familiar with each other. Also, in the group the personality characteristics of members influence the working in the group. Usually the group members are a mixture of dominant and submissive personalities. A group functions cohesively if there is one leader but if there are too many leaders there is confusion. Also if there is one leader even then there is confusion. However, once the group is formed, the group members collectively agree upon a set of group norms to achieve their objectives and these norms facilitate the teaching-learning process. We have identified these group norms in Unit 3 earlier. It is assumed that learning is a social process and participants learn effectively in a group. We have also seen in Unit 3 that the working of a group can be in four stages i.e. individual activity, syndicate or group activity, inter-group activity and group review.

In Stage I individuals work alone on the tasks assigned to them. For example, work in the library to collect information on areas assigned. During Stage II individuals work in small groups, discuss information collected and see if it is what they needed and how everything fits in. In Stage III groups combine, put the work done together and see it in totality. In the last stage participants review the total work in the light of the objectives and see if these have been attained.

Stages in Group Development

We have seen earlier the four stages in the group development. Stage I refers to FORM, which is characterized by activity and dependence. Stage II i.e. STORM is characterized by intra-team conflict. Stage III, NORM is characterized by development of group cohesion. The last stage Stage IV PERFORM is characterized by task orientation.

All groups go through certain stages of development irrespective of their particular tasks. An understanding of the development of the group is important to monitor and influence the development of the training group. As a trainer, you should be able to determine the stage the group is in, what options for growth are available at a particular stage and anticipate the problem interactions. When you find members deviating, it is the time to intervene. The objective is

to help the group to progress from a collection of individuals to a cohesive unit whose members can work together efficiently.

The stages in the development of groups have been variously classified. Tuckman in his well known model identified five stages: Forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. These stages are sequential and developmental. The group will proceed through these stages only if its members are willing to grow and prepared to give up something at each step. If groups are unable to solve major issues and concerns, the situation may lead to conflict, apathy or ultimate disintegration of the group as discussed in Section 4.7. Group cohesiveness seems to depend on how well group members can relate in the same phase at the same time.

Stage 1: Forming

This stage denotes the initial formation of the group and bringing together of a number of individuals who identify the purpose of a group, its composition and terms of reference. At this stage, the members are occupied with orienting themselves personally and interpersonally. They begin to seek clarification and agreement about the purpose of the group and may express concern about the fit between the individual's and group's purpose. The learners have a desire for acceptance by the group and seek sub-group approval. They look towards the agenda, structure and establishment of ground rules.

The group at this stage has low task maturity. Thus, as a trainer, you should make expectations clear, set goals and instruct the group members in what is to be done and how and when it is to be done, and supervise closely. A discussion of the group's purpose would alone bring task clarification and commitment. The learners should have the opportunity to participate in setting norms and experience various pairings and sub-groupings.

Stage 2: Storming

As members of the group get to know each other better, they put forward their views more openly and forcefully. The disagreements are expressed and challenges offered on the nature of the task. Learners attempt to influence one another's ideas or opinions and there is competition for attention, recognition and influence. Questions regarding who is responsible for what; what are the rewards and criteria of evaluation etc. emerge and there appear conflicts over leadership, structure, power and authority. As a consequence, some learners may remain silent while others tend to dominate.

Learners at this stage need to give up personal preferences and establish recommitment to the purpose of the total group. You must provide direction, add clarity to the goal and provide opportunity for questions from the group. You also need to manage conflicts effectively and assist group members to assume more responsibility for tasks. Assigning roles and functions, negotiating roles, and providing attention, support, praise and encouragement would be a trainer's important responsibilities.

Stage 3: Norming

As conflicts and hostility start to be controlled, learners establish guidelines and standards for performance. They are open minded, listen actively and accept

differences. They begin to share ideas and feelings, giving and receiving feedback, sharing information related to the task and exploring actions related to the task. As trust and acceptance have increased, the personal relations are characterized by cohesion. A sense of belonging to the group is experienced and leadership is shared. The learners, however, lack confidence and are unwilling to assume total responsibility for the task.

Your task as a trainer include providing opportunities for sharing ideas, facilitating group decision making and problem solving and providing feedback and socio-emotional support. You can encourage development of group identity, by encouraging them to adopt a symbol, develop a motto or any other group identity, picture or message. You can set tangible targets to check progress, ask constructive questions, clarify the group's thinking. Do not, however, try to impose any structure on the group and trust the group to achieve its maximum potential.

Stage 4: Performing

At this stage the group concentrates on the attainment of its purposes and performance of their common tasks is likely to be at its most effective. The group is competent, confident and highly motivated. Activities are marked by both collaboration and functional competition. The emphasis is on achievement and the overall goal is productivity through work performance. The learners are self assured and their relationships are empathetic. There is unity, group morale is high and group loyalty is intense. The group does not need directions or socio-emotional support.

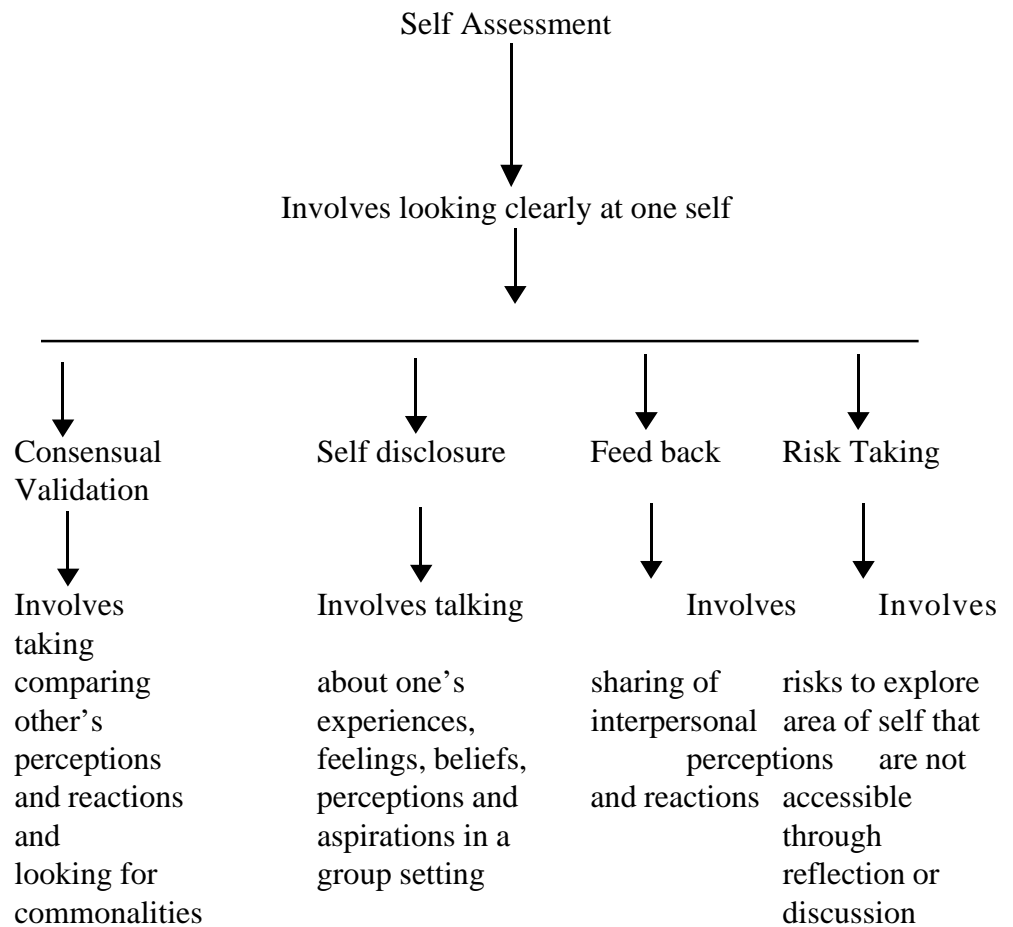
The trainer at this stage should provide periodic reinforcement for outstanding achievements and be present for clarification of any task relevant information. The rotation of roles and functions in a planned manner would be conducive for the vitality of the group.

Stage 5: Adjourning (only in the case of groups formed only for a specific duration or to complete a specific task)

There is termination of task behaviour at this stage and provides an opportunity to reassess the current needs of the group members. At this stage, the trainer should provide recognition for participation and achievement to group members and an opportunity to say personal good byes. This task should be accomplished within a specified time frame and have a recognizable end point.

Groups exert powerful influence on the growth of individuals who comprise them. The social interactions among the group members are powerful in shaping the behaviour of individuals. The individuals become more aware of themselves and share their feelings. Sharing interpersonal perceptions and reactions, there is increased awareness of options among group members. In atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence, the learners are willing to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Such awareness enables learners to make wise choices.

Growth Process in Groups



Group Energy

Group energy is its life force which guides it towards achievement or failure. Positive group energy generates constructive exploration, interdependence, clarity and action, whereas negative group energy generates avoidance, dependence, confusion and stagnation. Group energy also actually depends upon cooperative action taken among the members of the group.

Group energy is generated when group members interact with each other. Can you say what might happen when this interaction starts? Well yes! If members get along with each other, are clear about objectives, have knowledge, they indulge in problem solving and thus reach a satisfying end result. Similarly, you can visualize different end results depending on the kind of energies generated in the group.

For generating positive group energies and thus for a group to function effectively, its members must demonstrate the following behaviours because these behaviours are facilitatory in nature. These comprise:

- listening attentively, accurately and sensitively;
- responding to feelings rather than content;
- being patient with members within it;
- accepting silence and non-involvement from a member of the group;
- communicating concern;

- summarizing and describing understanding;
- being in touch with one’s own feelings and responding in congruence;
- expressing both positive and negative feelings;
- sharing personal concerns;
- bringing spontaneous concerns;
- being spontaneous rather than pre-determined;
- avoiding interpretation of participants’ behaviours to hasten learning process; and
- relying on the experience and knowledge of participants.

You must realize that for every facilitative behaviour there is a non-facilitative behaviour and if non-facilitative behaviours are operative in a group, the functioning of the group is disrupted. Some such behaviours may be:

- exploiting needs of participants;
- pushing, manipulating and making rules;
- judging and evaluating;
- believing in a single approach – being rigid;
- centring the discussion;
- giving interpretations; and
- being emotionally aloof.

Can you imagine a situation where you realize that your needs are being exploited for somebody’s personal gains? You may feel helpless in this situation but you also experience anger because somebody is cashing on your helplessness.

Activity 1

1) Make an observation schedule to observe the working of a newly formed group.

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2) List 5 facilitating and 5 non-facilitating behaviours of members of a group.

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3) List non-facilitative behaviours for every facilitative behaviour listed in this part of the Unit.

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Small Group Activities

Group size may vary from large groups comprising of 50 or 100 or thousands of people as its members, to a small group with only 5-15 people in it. Learning is better in small groups; it is more manageable. Let us now study what these small groups are and how they function. Small group activities as the name suggests are a range of activities where learners are assigned to small groups to work on given assignments in order to achieve particular objectives. The assignments may range from games through discussions, case studies and skill practices. Small group activities are not only used in formal learning environment but as an ongoing process of problem solving, quality circles, continuous improvement or continuous learning.

Advantages of small group activities

- Learners are able to acquire knowledge and try out skills in a less threatening environment.
- These activities give opportunity to encourage individuals to participate and make them more confident.
- Participants are able to work on problems in practical situations.
- The learner is able to gain equal opportunity for leadership in a group.
- There is an element of healthy competitive spirit that is developed in the group.
- Environment becomes more motivating for trainers.
- Change in attitudes / values is more possible in small groups.

We need to consider seating plans as well as group composition while forming or organizing small groups.

Participatory Learning Methods

Whether one is working alone or in a group that is large or small, what is most crucial for learning is the active involvement of the learner. This is also called interactive or participatory learning.

Hence participatory learning is a strategy that involves learning and active participation by the individuals may be referred to as the participatory approach. In these situations, learning is most effective. Group work or individual, application-oriented assignments give trainers an opportunity to participate actively and also learn effectively.

There are a large number of methods available to us today which have the potential of involving learners whole heartedly in the learning process. We are presenting many of these in the following pages. For any training programme, it is neither possible nor desirable to master skills in using all these methods. This is why although we will be listing most of these methods we will be elaborating the detailed use of only a few. Some/more of these methods will reappear in Unit 8 which deal with practical application of participatory methods. This is to show you how these methods are actually used in the field. You can use your creativity to design more methods that you feel can be applicable in your particular situation. You can also seek help from your contact centre should you have any doubts.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Mention seven characteristics of groups.

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2) What are participatory learning methods?

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7.3 PARTICIPATORY LEARNING METHODS (PALM)

A list of participatory methods that we may use during group formation is presented in the following discussion. This is intended as a guide. We as trainers need to be creative while using these techniques. Pictures, drawings, flannel board, puppets and the like may be used as support material.

Use of Training Method or Methods

The method/methods you select should keep the trainee interested and involved all along in the training so that learning is enhanced. Provide and ensure a means for the trainee to learn the specific training content that you have identified.

Let us see some commonly used methods which are effective in training.

D) **Lecture:** In this method you i) orally present new information to your trainees using various communication tools, but do not read from them;

ii) answer trainees, promote interest and illustrate the points. The steps in conducting a lecture session include the following:

- Introduce the topics, objectives set for the session.
- Outline the main points by using examples.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Encourage trainees to ask questions and interact.

The lecture is the most commonly used instructional strategy for working with groups of learners, and you as a trainer of trainers will be addressing yourself to many groups of learners.

Presentation by a Resource Person – Ask a specialist to give a presentation in a workshop. Brief her/him about the needs of learners and tell learners what and how to get information from the specialist. Help them to frame some questions to ask the specialist.

Let us see how you can improve the effectiveness of your lectures.

- i) *Be organized:* Do plan your lectures ahead of time and be logical in your order of presentation.
 - ii) *Allow for periodic breaks:* Don't have the learners sit and listen too long. Provide them frequent breaks when they can relax and informally discuss the ideas that have been presented.
 - iii) *Use visuals:* Charts, slides and overhead transparencies all help by allowing the learners to see what they have been hearing in the lecture.
 - iv) *Allow for questions:* Provide a time for questions and answers periodically. Try and respond to each question in a way that lets the learner know that you appreciate that she has asked the question.
 - v) *Arrange the seating:* Try to arrange the seating in such a way that it is less formal and allows the learners to see each other as well as the instructor. This seating arrangement will allow more interaction between the learners.
 - vi) *Provide opportunities for small group discussion:* Once or twice during the lecture provide a question or two that can be used as a discussion topic for small groups. Allow the groups 5 – 10 minutes to discuss the topic and then have them share their ideas with the whole group. When they – the group members have arrived at an appropriate answer/view— then continue your lecture.
- II) **Group Discussion:** A group discussion is not a debate or speech or an argument or conversation or a public opinion. Participants may discuss the material more in-depth, share insights and experiences and answer questions. Participants can reflect on the lecture topic before, during or after a presentation.

Focussed Group Discussion

A focussed group discussion is dealing with a particular theme. When every learner presents his/her viewpoint, experience and perception on a chosen topic and agrees, disagrees or adds to another's viewpoint, perception or experience, this adds to the focussed group discussion. Since every learner talks on the basis of his/her own understanding of the problem there are chances that while presenting their viewpoint they may lose the focus of discussion and go off tangent. A facilitator/learner's job is to keep the learners on the track. Raising/posing a few basic questions and asking the learners to keep the discussion around those questions helps in maintaining this focus.

Discussion must end with consensus which the learners must arrive at and someone from the group must wind up in the end to say what has been the consensus.

- Here you lead the group of trainees in discussing a topic. But the group size should be small, otherwise the discussion will be less effective.
- Select the group and make sure that the group goes through the following steps:
 - Define the problem;
 - Gather the background information;
 - Develop alternative solutions;
 - Test each solution; and
 - Choose the best solution.
- Explain to the group members their role –
 - They are the speakers.
 - They should not interrupt.
 - They must listen carefully.
 - They should be brief and concise.
 - They should be objective.
 - They should be honest and frank.
 - They should help the chairperson by integrating the information given by the speakers, analyze and mediate if any argument comes up between the speakers.

Your responsibility as a trainer or the chairperson is to:

- Clarify;
- Help;
- Ask;

- Integrate;
- Recapitulate;
- Mediate;
- Analyze; and
- Next step question.

After the group discussion is over the proceedings need to be recorded for future reference.

This can be done by:

- i) Stating the problem;
- ii) Summarizing relevant points;
- iii) Emphasizing/noting important points of agreement and disagreement;
- iv) Stating the conclusions; and
- v) Recording the plan for action.

III) **Case Study:** A case study is an analysis of an actual event or situation. By interviewing and observing various people connected with the case by examining records, we can collect a lot of useful information. Hence case studies present “real” pictures of individual events, situations or institutions with facts, objectives, information or data. Learners analyze all the information to interpret, predict and resolve issues associated with the case study.

You can give information to trainees about a situation and help them to come to a decision or solve a problem concerning the situation. A case study may be brief or lengthy.

IV) **Role Play:** Trainees act out any aspect of a real life situation in an instructional setting. It helps develop insight into what is happening, develops interest in the learner, and provides an opportunity for a trainer to see a situation from a perspective different from her own. Learners assume the role or identify with a particular character, organization, professional occupation etc. It is a good technique to follow up if extempore skits (skits developed and presented on the spot) can be enacted by first preparing a script.

V) **Demonstration:** Show to the group exactly how an activity can be performed. Then you may or may not ask the participants to do the same. Be around to provide guidance if participants are asked to repeat the activity.

In this method, you show the correct steps for completing a task. Various types of communication tools can be used to highlight different steps. Demonstrations can be classified in two ways:

- a) **Result Demonstration:** Shows the result of some activity, practice or procedure through evidence that can be seen, heard or felt.
- b) **Method Demonstration:** Illustrates how to do something in a step-by-step fashion.

Demonstrations are most effective when the learners are concerned with an issue or a problem and are looking for an answer. It is important that the person doing the demonstration knows the content very well and is able to answer the questions as they arise during the demonstration.

- VI) **Games:** In order to start a session or to get students to mix/get to know each other, some ice-breaking games can be used.
- VII) **Experience Exchange:** Individual trainees can be asked to relate their experiences to the whole group so that all the trainees benefit from one person's experiences.
- VIII) **Field Visits/Trips:** You can take the trainees for trips or field visits for first hand experience e.g., visiting a Food Preservation Centre, Printing Press etc. These can be combined with observation and interviewing. Arrange a visit to a place of relevance to the group.
- IX) **Theatre:** You can organize skits, street plays or songs on a particular theme. Let some of the trainees act, sing and others can tell the theme on which the group is enacting/singing.
- X) **Group Work:** In this method you divide the large group into smaller groups, allot work to the groups; trainees work in their groups. After the stipulated time, the group leaders report to the whole large groups about the findings or outcomes of their group's work.
- XI) **Debate:** You could choose a topic related to your session, give time to trainees to prepare and present to the whole group their view points. Debates may be classified as (i) Formal Debates and (ii) Informal Debates. After a debate on a topic the judges decision is given (Note: The judges are selected from amongst the same group) at the end. This procedure will avoid an overemphasis on who 'won' and who 'lost' in a Formal Debating Scenario. In the Informal Debate, after a topic is announced, participants select the pro or con side and move in two different directions. The debate continues until the topic is adequately discussed.

This highly participative procedure is particularly useful to introduce a session or a topic. It may also be used on an ad-hoc basis when opinions differ in the course of a discussion.

After you have selected the method, you have to start the actual training. There is a sequence of principles which should be followed for presenting your information. These principles are:

- i) Move from simple to complex
- ii) Move from general to specific
- iii) Use an existing logical organization
- iv) Use job performance order.

Besides ensuring the selection of the correct method and the right sequence, do ensure the use of the right type of support materials. These support materials are:

- The *audio-visual materials* like slides, video cassettes, charts, posters, audio-cassettes, OHP transparencies, puppets, models etc. and
- *Printed materials* like the textbooks, manuals, handouts, instruction modules, assignment sheets, workbooks, journals or magazines etc.

While managing the training process, ensure the use of audiovisual and printed materials as they are very useful. We have listed some of the specific advantages of (i) audiovisual materials (ii) printed materials for your reference.

i) Audiovisual materials can:

- provide reality to training;
- contribute to faster understanding and absorption of the message;
- help in greater retention as learning takes place through more than one sense;
- help maintain the attention and interest of participants; and
- provide variety and motivation in the teaching/training session.

ii) Printed materials can:

- be distributed to a large number of trainees at relatively low cost.
- be kept for future reference.
- be used for self or independent or group study.
- communicate information in more depth.
- form an alternative mode of giving information to trainees and
- give to the trainer the added confidence in their delivery.

Till this point you have been concerned with all the things that have to take place in advance of the training programme. But now you have to consider all the things that have to go right during the programme and for it to be effective to the maximum.

Now your role as a trainer or communicator is very important and much more visible than the planning stage. At the present stage that is 'Implementation' you have to:

- Organize the participants into sub-groups/teams;
- Delegate work to them; and
- Provide ongoing control.

Some of the other methods which are used for training groups are listed here:

- i) *Activity profile*: Different people may be asked about their daily activities. They can be interviewed and observed and asked to write about themselves. Whenever one needs detailed information on a particular occupation/personality this method is very useful.
- ii) *Brainstorming*: Participants are asked to react on a particular topic/problem/issue in as different ways as possible. They have the courage to

think creatively about a topic and produce ideas which are different from the usual. Innovative, unique or untried ideas are equally considered. Any topic may be selected for exploration. The idea is to generate new ideas or varied and alternative solutions to a problem. The group members get a chance to look at things from different angles.

- iii) *Buzz Groups*: These are small clusters of learners who are temporarily grouped together for a short period to address a topic presented by a facilitator. The groups can discuss various aspects of a scenario and later compare different viewpoints that have emerged.
- iv) *Concept Models*: Handouts that may be used to ask a series of questions may be given to participants in small groups to figure out how something works or build a conceptual model. Participants make their own diagrams and record observations. They also create their own simulations by linking concepts and drafting new models or procedures, operations or strategies.
- v) *Community Surveys*: Participants may go round the community and ask a number of people about the selected aspects. Information thus collected forms the basis of further planning of project or developmental work. Suppose you want to know about community resources and how they are being used. Your aim is to work out better utilization of these resources. What will you do?
- vi) *Consultation with specialists*: Participants here carry out an interview with a specialist or knowledgeable person on an issue for which they may need more information. The information may be valuable in further planning of projects.
- vii) *Critical Incident*: Participants here use problem situations to analyze advantages and disadvantages and possible solutions to a given situation. For example, a group has saved a lot of money to buy a building, but just before they go to buy the material, the treasurer tells them that all the money has been looted. A discussion on the issue may be held.
- viii) *Construction Spiral*: Pose a problem to the group and use a three-step learning approach.
 - Each individual tries to solve it at his/her own level.
 - Next they discuss the problem and solution in small groups by pooling individual effort.
 - Finally, participants complete the answer on the board in front of the whole group. As a facilitator any evaluation or changes can be made to what the group offers. Let the group correct itself. If weaknesses appear or more sophisticated understanding is needed, post a second problem in the same manner. First questions usually begin at a reflex limit to engage the students. This method is used to construct understandings and concepts.
- ix) *Discovery/Info Search*: Participants are given access to manuals, publications, charts, books, the Internet and other tools in order to find information or answer questions.

- x) *Describing Visual Images:* Choose a photograph or drawing with a clear, relevant message. Before displaying the image ask three volunteers to leave the room. Discuss with other participants how to describe the picture. Ask the first person to return and listen to the description of the image, without looking at it. Let him tell the second person and let the second person tell the third person. Now ask the third person to draw the picture. Discuss. Use this to highlight how messages become distorted when passed from one person to another.
- xi) *Folk Songs:* Ask people to sing local traditional songs. They are a good source of information on culture and traditions of the community. You can also learn a lot about values, practices and local terminology. Since everybody knows these songs and everybody sings together, these songs can be used to disseminate information by substituting words. Just try.
- xii) *Elaboration:* Participants are given only a position of a scenario and asked to elaborate on what they think actually happened. It is like completing a story on the basis of one's own background information and perception. If other members agree/disagree with the presentation it reflects on their thinking, attitudes and philosophy of life.
- xiii) *Forecasting:* Participants in this case are presented a scenario, simulation or situation and then asked what should happen next, what would they do next? The participants are expected to 'predict' the future by explaining what will develop. It is different from the earlier method because it involves a kind of brainstorming on problem solving.
- xiv) *Forum:* A strategy that gives each participant a choice to express his or her views. A "roundtable" format may be used for responding to a particular topic. You can impose a time limit for each participant. This will ensure that no one is monopolizing and everyone gets a chance.
- xv) *How to make a session plan:* Use a useful activity like session planning to illustrate the importance of sequencing and planning. Write out the sequence of activities that have to be done to develop a session plan. Show how they have to be done in a certain order and need to be planned in advance. The method emphasizes the importance of sequencing of activities and advance planning in doing anything in life. It teaches participants to be systematic in their approach.
- xvi) *Information Collection:* Ask members to collect information on relevant subjects at the local library, offices, service organizations, and the like. This is useful for finding out what is needed or the likely results of an idea before trying it out in practice.

If it is a library, make proper notes and maintain the reference of book, author page number and library itself. If it is an organization, note down the name of the office and officer besides noting down the details of information obtained. Go prepared with questions to know what you want to know in order to have the right information.

- xvii) *Interview:* A useful methodology to find out personal viewpoints of people. It is conducted by asking questions of key informants individually or in a group, near a meeting point such as a tea shop or a village hand

pump. Use semi-structured interview or open-ended interview schedules which may be developed before the interview.

- xviii) *Local History*: Local people are the best source of information about history of the area. Participants can interview older residents for a detailed account of the past and how things have changed.
- xix) *Making Puzzles*: Cut large sheets of paper into two or more puzzle pieces. Then mark the 'right' side. Give each participant a piece and ask them to combine the pieces with or without talking. Watch what happens and use the results to discuss communication and group cooperation. It is a very good method for members to know each other and help each other. Well known phrases and idioms are also used e.g. 'Empty vessels make much noise.' Puzzles can also frequently be used.

Divide each saying in two parts and hand over to the participants. Let them find each other.

- xx) *Memory Game*: Show 20 objects found locally. Ask the participants to remember them. Print them in a bag one by one. Then ask one volunteer to name them and write them down on a list. Ask the other participants as a group to write them down well. Compare the lists, discuss and complete. Discuss finally the advantages of cooperation.
- xxi) *Panel*: Several experts sit around a table and discuss a topic in the presence of the participants. Later, they may answer questions from members of the audience. Learners may prepare questions in advance for panelists. Each learner can submit one question anonymously.
- xxii) *Peer Teaching*: Also called cooperative learning. Each learner reads a different selection and then teaches the essence of the material to his or her randomly assigned partner(s). You can encourage participants to share material that reflects their experience and occupation.

Too many girls dropout of school before completing their education in your area. Are you worried? Do you want it to stop and girls to get educated? How do you solve this problem or any similar problem?

- xxiii) *Problem Solving*: You may be facing many problems from time to time. What do you do? Remember, problem solving is an approach where a problem is described at length to come to a common solution. Discussion involves bringing to light the causes, suggestions for dealing with causes and resources that are needed for tackling the problem. Thus the group jointly takes decisions about what needs to be done and how, assigns responsibility and also monitors the successes and failures of all the strategies.
- xxiv) *Puppet Shows*: Use puppets to express opposing ideas. Puppets are good for discussing controversial issues as they are not "real" and can be allowed to say what they like without causing offence. If you decide to use puppets you definitely need a script which you can adapt from someone else's or write one yourself. Practice movements along with the script, before presenting the puppet play before the participants. You can make your own puppets and glove puppets are quite effective and useful.

- xxv) *Simulation*: Create a realistic model of an actual situation or environment. You can even use a computer modelling programme incorporating multiple dimensions and perspectives to illustrate complex scenarios. It helps the learner to tryout the skill in a situation which is close to real and get over the initial fear. A simulation does not need any special props for effective organization. For learners it is a kind of make believe situation which is very close to reality.
- xxvi) *Spoken messages*: Think of a message that suits the situation. Communicate the message to one member and tell him/her to pass the message around from one person to another by whispering. Ask one person to communicate with another by whispering. Ask the last person to repeat what she/he has heard. Discuss how and why the message changed, how misunderstanding can be avoided and what can be learnt from this game.
- xxvii) *Video Analysis*: Show a video or a video clip without any introduction or elaboration. The participants “present” their analysis of the video to each other in small groups. Use an interesting video that will stimulate dialogue and interpretation. The small group interactions can later be shared in large groups and a consensus can be arrived at. The advantage of this procedure is to see the presentation from different angles. This kind of methodology is good to sensitize learners to the fact that things can be interpreted from different viewpoints.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Name five learning methods that you feel may be effective in the promotion of women’s rights awareness in a small group based in an urban slum. Why do you think these aids are suitable?
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- 2) What preparation will you need for a panel discussion and why?
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- 3) Why and when should you organize a community survey? What preparation would you require to make it a success?
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- xxviii) *The Dyad*: ‘The Dyad’ or as the name suggests a ‘pair’ is a sure fire participative technique. In this situation the trainer needs to ask her group of participants to turn to their partners or neighbours and discuss a given problem or aspect. It may be a person to the right or left of the participants. This strategy is useful to serve as an ice breaker, encourages thought and discussion about a topic prior to its presentation, serves as a team of two observers who are to give feedback – about ongoing training activity or give feedback on an exchange basis concerning one’s behaviour, etc.
- xxix) *The Triad*: Triads or trios are important configurations in small group work. These are small enough to provide privacy and intimacy and at the same time large enough to bring a “multiple” viewpoint to bear on a problem or training assignment. They also provide for variety in small group work. The trainer can ask learners to take people sitting on right and left as partners. This type of group interaction has also the same advantages as enjoyed by dyads.
- xxx) *Fish Bowl*: This strategy is also called ‘cluster’ or ‘group on group’ technique. It is a highly worthwhile tool for the trainer who is interested in dynamic group involvement methods. In the Fish Bowl exercise, two groups are formed:

Group A = Discussion Group

Group B = Observation Group

In a typical Fish Bowl setting, the inner group can be given an assignment based on content and/or processing. Group A discusses about a topic for 15-20 minutes and then secures feedback from those in the outer circle i.e. Group B on one-on-one basis, recalling what was heard and the related aspects. Group A then returns to its prior discussion mode, integrating into the new round of discussion. Groups A and B switch places and Group B then becomes the discussion group.

The Fish Bowl may be used for the following:

- 1) Problem solving tool
- 2) Tool to generate divergent views
- 3) For team building
- 4) For improvement of inter-group communication and relations
- 5) As an ice breaker
- 6) To learn about group behaviour
- 7) As an agenda setting device
- 8) To identify objectives
- 9) To resolve conflict
- 10) To resolve a training issue
- 11) For mid - programme assessment
- 12) For evaluation of training
- 13) As a tool to engender fun and novelty

xxx) *In Basket Exercise:* The In Basket is a management simulation designed to provide skill practice in problem solving and decision making. In the basket are placed 5-10 ideas/games used for solving the same problem. This means that there are 5-10 different ways of attacking a problem. Learners can choose any one of these and work on it to solve the problem. For further practice she can choose another and then another.

The completed in-basket is subsequently analyzed and discussed by the group, thereby giving the participants an opportunity to receive feedback about their powers as decision makers. As you have seen, the procedure and approach teaches the learner that there can be different ways to solve a problem and problem solving involves looking at it from different aspects.

We have listed and described a variety of methods which can be used for learning in a participatory approach. All these methods can be useful if appropriately selected and correctly used. Initially, you may feel hesitant because you have never tried them. It is good to be adventurous and try out new techniques of teaching. So do not feel shy or reluctant to give each method a trial. Maintain a record of success and failures and the factors which you think have led to failure and successes. It will help you to plan your future strategies with more success. Some of these methods will reappear in the Units related to participatory training with more details which will help you to reinforce what you have already learnt.

Now let us look at a group observation sheet for a fish bowl exercise.

Group Observation Sheet for a Fish Bowl Exercise

You will shortly be observing the behaviour of a group engaging in an assigned fishbowl activity. Here are some things you may wish to look for:

1) *Getting Started:*

Was the group clear about its task? If not, did the participants attempt to redefine it? What method or procedures did they use to attack the problem?

How was the method adopted? Was the method adopted at the insistence of one dominant person? By group consensus (that is, talking it through without voting)? By voting? Was it adopted by default i.e. without discussion?

2) *Group behaviour:*

What was the energy/enthusiasm level of the group?

Was there high interest in the problem?

What was the participation pattern? Did some play it safe and hold back? Did all participate with adequate consistency? Was there a dominator? Did people really listen to one another? Did anyone interrupt the others consistently?

What was the trust level in the group? Did members share feelings openly? Were members supportive (did they show concern, caring, etc.) of one another?

Was the group marked by high cooperative spirit, cohesion?
 Was there a leader in the group? If so, did this leader help or hinder progress?
 3) *Decision Making:*
 Was a decision reached? If so, how?
 Was the decision arrived at through consensus building, voting, bargaining, or what?
 Were members satisfied with the decision?

In any analysis of education or training activity, why should we conduct an assessment of our strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats?

Read on to find out why SWOT analysis is so important.

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis has become a common place tool of strategic planning in education as it stands for:

- a) strengths
- b) weaknesses
- c) opportunities and
- d) threats

The aim of the exercise is to:

- maximize strengths;
- minimize weaknesses;
- reduce threats; and
- build on opportunities

You should try and use SWOT analysis for your different training methods. By this technique, you as a trainer can modify your strategy and use the method to maximum benefit.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Name ten methods which have most and another three methods which have least involvement of learners.

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2) Suggest a script idea on “Dowry” for a skit and name two other methods which you think will be useful to communicate messages related to this theme. Support your answer with reasons.

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3) Suggest a three character puppet show on “Income generation projects for women”. Why would you choose puppetry as the method and at what stage of presentation of your topic would you use puppetry?

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Although small groups have many advantages over large ones as far as learning is concerned, there are certain interfering factors also. If these are not attended to in time learning can be blocked. There could be some participants who are problem participants or some communication barriers. Let us find out more about these.

Coping with problem participants:

Most of the participants in a group are cooperative while in a few instances there might be some typical ones that can be identified as follows:

- *The Hesitant One:* This type of a participant is shy, reluctant and silent most of the time. We as trainers must draw out such participants and help them in participating in group work.
- *The Monopolizer:* This type is a “Big talker” and will want to talk all the time during group work. We as trainers could be polite and suggest “could we have another opinion on this from someone else please?”
- *The Voice of Experience:* This participant like the earlier one has a tremendous need to be heard. It is always best to treat him or her politely so that the group could move on.
- *The Arguer:* This participant would always look for opportunities to disagree with the other participants and the trainer. While healthy disagreement is good, continuous quibbling and arguing is annoying and disruptive. The best way to deal with such a participant is to let the group deal with such situations.
- *The Non-Listener:* Such a participant tends to interrupt and cut others off. The participant’s eagerness to be heard does not permit him or her to listen. This situation certainly calls for asking to repeat at times what others have stated in a discussion.
- *The Idea Zapper:* Such a participant would like to put down other participants’ ideas by saying “it will never work”, etc. The best way is to have such a participant take another look at things that have been zapped by him or her.
- *The Complainer:* Such a participant is a specialist in complaining, blaming,

fault finding etc. He or she will always tend to find life ‘unfair’. In order to deal with such a participant say – “There might be a problem with person ‘X’, but how would you deal with the same problem?”

- *The Rigid One:* The rigid participant would take a stand and rarely move from it. Such a participant will certainly not let the group work progress. The views presented even if opposed by the Rigid one may be put up for discussion.
- *The Hostile One:* The Hostile one has a need to zero in on a defenceless target and the trainer. We could in this case suggest to her that she should listen to the group’s opinion.
- *The Angry One:* Such a participant may show behaviour ranging from total silence and withdrawal to constant complaining. Such a participant would like to find loopholes in your ideas and present “what if” scenarios. This person’s energy can be channelized in creative directions by asking the person to lead a discussion or make a presentation if you find that this is useful. Find out what is causing the anger and address the problem constructively.
- *The Negative One:* The negative one has a tendency to find the gloomy side of things. The best approach is to ask her if she could find anything positive in the situation.
- *The Clown:* Some of these participants may be characterized by ill feeling, sometimes irritating humour. The best method is to try and reinforce her serious side.
- *The Show off:* Such participants might like to parade their knowledge. It is easy for the group to deal with this problem. After giving reasonable opportunities to the show off, let other members or participants have their say.
- *The Tangent Taker:* This participant has interesting inputs but these may relate to some other situations. It might be easy to bring such a person to talk of relevance.

Barriers

The caste, socioeconomic status and likes and dislikes of the participants can interfere with smooth communication in the group and interfere with learning. Can you say how?

The language, dialect or pronunciation can also be in the way of smooth communication of a message.

Personal discomforts, especially physical, can also hamper learning e.g. too much heat/cold. As a facilitator see that these barriers are attended to and are not given the opportunity to hamper learning.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Mention two problems which can come up while using drama for learning. How will you overcome these?

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2) Where and why would you use the following:

- Dyads
- Simulation
- Participatory discussion
- Interview

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3) How will you take care to cope with problem participants?

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7.4 GROUP FORMATION: SHGs AND COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

In this section we will talk about two different types of groups. Self help groups are generally small and relatively more homogenous than cooperatives. Cooperatives typically operate on a much larger scale and they are more formal groups. We will tell you more about these groups in our course on Organization and Leadership. Here we will give you a few examples to clarify their relevance.

Self Help Groups

Self Help groups, as they are called, are not new phenomena, nor are they as unusual as you might think. In these past few years these groups have become widespread both at the international and national contexts.

A self help group is a self-directed work team, that comprises a group of members around 6-18 in number on an average, fully responsible for carrying out a well defined activity or task usually related to savings and credit. Each member in the group shares equal responsibility for carrying out the assigned tasks. Government schemes envisage successful creation of groups which are socially viable or groups possessing low financial capital but having a social capital in their network of relationships.

Such groups are organized to get involved in raising savings, deciding the amount of loans or rate of interest, schedule of payment, recovery etc. Weekly meetings are designed to be participated in and are regularly motivated by the intervenors. In a period of 6-9 months it is expected that SHGs will be able to access loans from Banks for the purpose of further income generation activities. Over a period of time it is expected to lead to adequate participative decision taking and to ensure de-centralized management.

SHGs based on national experience have shown to have started initially with loans for consumption and over time moved to loans for petty business before acquiring assets.

The Formation of SHGs

The formation of SHGs is conceived in two steps:

- Formation of a group through intervention by giving it a name and identifying a place for meeting and opening of an account in the nearest bank, identification of office bearers in terms of chairperson, secretary/ treasurer.
- After a group has been established over 6-15 months. By this time the groups become functional and it is expected that the group would begin to lend from its own funds and members will be provided with opportunities to acquire the skills and decide on timing of loans, schedule of re-payment and interest rates.

It is expected that the common fund would be revolving and steadily increasing and the recovery rate expected may be over 90% and attendance over 60%. By this time the groups would have established confidence to deal with Government Institutions, Banks and other Private Institutions.

Establishment of such women-centric, viable community-based institutions can be expected to serve as a nucleus for improving awareness, confidence. They can also serve as a redressal forum for many problems which plague women.

Cooperative Societies

Co-operative societies have been formed with a view to augment women's participation in development and employment generation with promotional efforts from State Commissions for Women. The cooperative societies were formed with the help of various NGOs. The emphasis of most cooperative societies is to provide the producers with maximum profit from the sale of their produce eliminating middlemen or women. Members of cooperative societies which are well run get the advantage of not being exploited while earning the maximum.

7.5 CASE STUDIES

The following case studies show you some interesting glimpses related to training groups.

Kishori Mandal

At each of the rehabilitated villages it was found that young girls and daughters-in-law of member families showed much interest in village level meetings and

training camps. Adolescent girls were involved in these in livelihood programmes directly and indirectly. Daughters and daughters-in-law of SEWA's members were involved in SEWA activities such as animal husbandry, wasteland and water management and forestry.

Older SEWA members were demanding opportunities — especially education and vocational training — for their daughters and there was an increasing interest and involvement in SEWA among the girls. In response, SEWA's leadership critically reviewed the need for a specific programme for adolescent girls. The overall goal of investing in adolescent girls is to create a strong cadre of future members and leaders of SEWA, to continue the momentum of activities and take forward the movement of full-employment and self-reliance for women. The objective was to improve the economic and social well being of adolescent girls in rural areas of Gujarat by improving their literacy, leadership and livelihood skills and expanding their livelihood and employment opportunities.

Kishori Mandals were started in 5 villages of Vadodara district following a demand from village elders. Vocational and awareness training in health, insurance, agriculture, water and nursery raising was given to adolescent girls.

SEWA Initiatives with Capacity Building of Women in Agriculture

SEWA's initiatives with agricultural workers encourages them to meet with a "spearhead team" on a monthly basis to discuss problems in this field. During the monthly meeting of the agricultural committee, a lot of issues have been raised such as insufficient and irregular employment in the agricultural sector, water shortage, high cost of seeds and fertilizers which leads to high production costs, increased mechanization of agriculture, increased use of chemical fertilizers without adequate knowledge, no identity for agricultural labours, little emphasis on health and safety and effect of globalization on agriculture.

Based on the cropping system and seasons like "Rabi", "Kharif" and "Summer", pre-seasonal and seasonal training were held for the Spearhead team members. SEWA received overwhelming response from them during these trainings.

It was decided to form a core committee to look after the training of the Spearhead team and monitor progress in the follow-up. The team would meet once a month for training. District level training was organized for spearhead teams, who would then train grassroot workers, women farmers/women agriculture workers. Information was also given on district-specific issues and problems related to agriculture.

The following subjects were identified for training: Soil and Water management, farm development and management, raising of field and horticulture crops, importance of using recyclable natural resources, rational use of chemical inputs, integrated pest and disease management, importance of animal husbandry in diversified agriculture, marketing of agricultural commodities and processing of value added products, pros and cons of WTO in relation to our agricultural sector, establishment of rights of agricultural workers in relation to socio-economic security.

7.6 LET US SUM UP

A group consists of two or more people with a common goal. Members interact and depend on each other. Group formation can be intentional and the size can

also vary. Small groups are good for effective learning and participatory approaches.

Self Help Groups is one such participatory action approach. There are many methods which have been used successfully in a participatory approach. Used judiciously, they can be a boon for a trainer because learning can thus be an interesting and useful experience for the trainee.

7.7 GLOSSARY

Divergent	: In different directions even conflicting
Ice breaking	: There is a degree of inhibition in the initial stages of training between the participants which disappears with the passage of time, as the participants interact with each other and become familiar with each other. This is referred to as breaking the ice.

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1)
 - i) have a common goal/objective
 - ii) have a defined role
 - iii) participate in attaining the objectives
 - iv) are interdependent
 - v) share responsibility
 - vi) practice a set of common norms and values
 - vii) identify themselves with the group
- 2) Participatory learning methods refer to active involvement of learners in the process of learning. This means these methods encourage them to think, analyze and interact with the trainer, other trainees and resource persons. Activities may encourage them to work in the community, learn from field work and community members.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1)
 - i) Focus group discussion
 - ii) Puppet show
 - iii) Role Play
 - iv) Simulation
 - v) Video analysis

These learning/training methods are useful in an urban slum setting. They are interactive and stimulate interaction between learners and trainers.

- 2) (i) Identification of theme, sub-themes (ii) resource persons identification (iii) informing resource persons about topics for each time for presentation (iv) Organization for interacting with the audience.
- 3) When you need accurate information from the community itself, a community survey is very useful. If trained workers are available, they can help you to conduct the survey. The community members themselves can do the survey with some training. Training orientation, deciding on tools and technique is most important.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Focus group discussion may have the maximum involvement and lecture the least. Choose from among the methods given.
- 2) Develop the script for the skit based on a story idea. The skit can be supported by focussed group discussion, construction spiral, fish bowl exercise. These methods give opportunities for interaction and problem solving.
- 3) Puppetry is a method of choice when you are using local characters and situations. The audience easily relates to them. You can even deal with sensitive matters in a humourous manner without annoying any person.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) The drama may not relate to a real life situation which the audience can identify with. Also the audience may not learn and look at the drama merely as entertainment. This can be overcome by taking care to develop a relevant drama. Secondly the drama should be proceeded with and followed.
- 2) Dyads: Ice breaker, discussion, constituting teams of observers

Simulation: Helps the learner to try out a skill in a situation close to the real.

Participatory discussion: Enables sharing and arriving at a common discussion/action.

Interview: Finding out personal viewpoints of people.
- 3) Depending on the type of problem demonstrated by the participant, strategies can be chosen. Explain on the basis of the types of problem participants such as the monopolizer, the angry one, the hostile one, the experienced one, the rigid one and so on.