
UNIT 8 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF PLANNING

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

A plan is a course of action one intends to follow in order to solve a problem or change an existing situation. Planning is a process for accomplishing purposes. It is a blueprint for growth and a road map for development. It helps in deciding objectives both in quantitative and qualitative terms. It involves setting of goals on the basis of objectives and available resources.

A plan should be a realistic view of the expectations. Depending upon the activities, a plan can be long-term, intermediate-term or short-term. Preparation of a comprehensive plan will not guarantee success, but lack of a sound plan will almost certainly ensure failure. Therefore, it is essential that sound planning should be the first step of any activity. Planning can be summarized in three steps:

- Choosing a destination;
- Evaluating alternative routes; and
- Deciding the specific course of the plan.

In this Unit you will learn about methods and techniques of planning.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the reasons for planning;
- distinguish various types of planning;

- analyze the steps involved in making plans; and
- describe the various phases of planning.

8.3 REASONS FOR PLANNING

A plan can play a vital role in helping to avoid mistakes or recognize hidden opportunities. Preparing a satisfactory plan for any programme is essential. Planning helps in forecasting the future and makes the future 'visible' to some extent. It paves the way from where we are and where we want to go. Some of the reasons for planning include:

- Helping to clarify, focus and research the project's development and prospects;
- Providing a considered and logical framework within which a project can develop over the next three to five years or long-term; and
- Offering a benchmark against which actual performance can be measured and reviewed.

Just as no two organizations are alike, no two plans can be the same. It is, therefore, important to prepare a plan keeping in view the necessities of the programme. When we speak about making a plan to combat an existing gender gap, we begin with the clear knowledge that many factors and players are involved in the said situation. For example, if we are making a plan to improve educational opportunities for girls, we are taking into consideration the existing opportunities and the factors that affect those opportunities. Let us take examples. The existence of a school or college in the area; the distance that the girl children have to cover to reach that school and college, the availability of transport, the cost of transport, the tuition fees, the financial burden on the family are examples of factors affecting opportunities for schooling. Therefore, it is very important to make any plan keeping all these varied factors in mind.

Right at the beginning stages, it is essential to indicate clearly who is going to do what, where and when with regard to defined problems. Since a plan gives objectives, targets, strategies, a time frame and a budget, one can measure its effectiveness in reducing the problem and its efficiency in terms of cost.

8.4 BASIC TYPES OF PLANNING

Planning is done at two basic levels. These are Macro Planning or planning for the programme as a whole and Micro Planning or planning the specifics.

8.4.1 Macro Planning

Overall planning for any project is called macro planning. At the macro level, the written action plan will focus on analyzing the existing problems and developing strategies for the entire programme as a whole. Preparation of the plan will include discussion and decision-making in each of the principal areas to be included in the plan. The final plan will include the following:

- A situational analysis of the current magnitude of the problem and the resources available;
- Planned steps to reduce the problem (aims, objectives and targets) and how to achieve each step (strategies, timetable, budget);
- How to implement these activities (management); and
- How to measure whether the objectives are achieved (monitoring and evaluation).

Much emphasis should be placed on developing human resources (training and retraining) and providing adequate facilities and all the resources needed for effective implementation of the plan.

8.4.2 Micro Planning

Micro Planning is planning at the lowest level of development. It brings the planning process to the grassroots level to tackle specific problems at the micro level. Development of local resources and provision of infrastructure facilities receives due attention during the process of micro planning, along with local tradition, history, values and practices.

The main reasons for undertaking local/micro level planning are as follows:

- Giving specific attention to the needs of the targeted groups;
- Fine tuning programmes towards the specific needs of the area;
- Decentralizing the planning process;
- Building a closer partnership with the people and the planners; and
- Organizing and coordinating the lowest echelons of the administration.

At the micro level, the written plan will focus more on the actual tasks to be performed – and by whom, where and when – taking into account resources (human, financial, physical) and organization of those resources. Planning at the micro level needs to be more pragmatic and less conceptual than at the macro level.

8.4.3 Coordinating Macro (National) and Micro (Regional) Plans

Planning at the central and peripheral levels should not be considered separate exercises, but complementary ones. Information from specific areas on the magnitude of the problems and requirements for human resources, infrastructure and equipment is essential for policy-planning at the macro level. Similarly, national guidance and policy should also be reflected in regional planning. Note that in many developing countries, funding of most regional activities is still decided centrally.

Table 8.1: Planning at Macro and Micro Levels

Planning level	Focus	Example
Macro level: Strategic planning	Overall objectives; overall inputs to achieve objectives; procedures	Make reproductive health education a part of the national programme in all girls schools
Micro level: Operational planning	Activities based on local needs; optimal utilization of available resources	Train teachers to teach students of 10 th , 11 th and 12 th standards the basics of reproductive health.

Let us take another example. In addition to reproductive health education provided by the government sector, such services are also provided by NGOs and private players. Even non-health sectors can contribute to reproductive health education, such as the district administration, schoolteachers and philanthropists who can contribute towards the salary of the teachers, the printing of materials and training/education programmes.

It is essential to involve all participating parties in the planning process. Co-operation and collaboration during the planning stage can avoid duplication and will increase the efficiency of the programme.

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) List the reasons for planning at the micro level.

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8.5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANS

Different types of plans can be categorized as follows:

- **Single-use plans**

These are used to plan a specific event. When the end is reached or the event completed, the plan is dissolved.

- **Standing plans**

This plan is designed for a situation that reoccurs often enough to justify a standardized approach.

- **Contingency plans**

These plans are formulated to address specific future occurrences that might have impact on the organization or community.

- **Crisis management plans**

These plans are formulated to deal with specific crises that can occur in the future.

8.6 FORMULATING PLANS

The planning process can be condensed into five essential questions we must ask ourselves. Let us work with a simple example. If we are considering a programme for increasing the uptake of girls in primary education for girls and reducing the number of dropouts in school-going girl children, we can adopt the steps in this manner. These are:

- Where are we now? (Situation analysis)
- Where do we want to go? (Priorities, goals, targets)
- How will we get there? (Strategy, organization and management)
- How will we know where we arrive? (Monitoring and evaluation)
- What new problems do we have? (Forward planning)

Question 1: Where are we now? (Situation analysis)

First, we need to know the problem. What is its magnitude? Who are the people affected (in terms of communities or geographical areas)? Where are these people living? We need to know the available resources in terms of personnel, infrastructure and funds to deal with this problem. What are the present and past occurrences of

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school dropouts in the area? How are resources utilized? If these resources were not utilized optimally, what were the constraints? How can those constraints be overcome? Are there enough resources to deal with the problems? If not, what extra resources would be required?

Data on needs, present and past output, available human resources and available facilities, equipment and supplies, can be collected by one person or by one or more small groups of people.

When the data collection is complete, all data are reviewed and approved by the planning committee, usually during a review meeting where all involved parties are represented. In the same forum, all identified constraints in providing primary school education for girls (including the distance to the school, the financial constraints, lack of teachers), human resources and facilities and equipment are reviewed.

Question 2: Where do we want to go? (Priorities, goals, targets)

The constraints and the proposed actions to overcome them – as identified in the situation analysis – become the building blocks for the action plan.

To begin with, we have to outline the objective of the programme. An “objective” is defined as the action that is proposed to overcome a constraint or problem that has been identified during a situation analysis. As much as possible, objectives should be stated in ways that will make them measurable. The objectives should also include a time frame.

For example, assume that the needs assessment showed a high prevalence of school dropouts among girls. The constraint is, “Less than 20% of all schoolchildren aged 10-15 years complete primary school in a particular area”. The objective is, “to make sure that at least 80% of all schoolchildren are retained in primary schools by 2020”.

It may not be possible to address all constraints and therefore, priorities must be set as to what to tackle first and what later. Aims, objectives and targets must be realistic, keeping in mind the available human, infrastructure and financial resources. Overambitious programmes often result in activities not being completed in time or at all, targets not being met and objectives not being achieved.

Question 3: How will we get there? (Strategy, organization and management)

Activities and sub-activities are directed towards the achievement of the objectives in the action plan. Taken together, the activities and sub-activities are called the “strategy”, i.e. the best way to achieve an objective.

Strategies must be clearly defined. In the example above, the proposed strategy is to make sure that girl children complete primary school in the said area.

The sub-activities in this example could be:

- Ensuring various stakeholders – parents, teachers, community leaders, non-governmental organizations and school management etc. are involved in the project;
- Getting support of the district education officer is also significant;
- Developing a simple methodology that can be used by teachers to assess why girls drop out of schools;
- Making house visits to speak to parents and guardians about the importance of basic education for girl children;

- Developing training materials to help girl students cope with their studies while handling additional responsibilities at home;
- Developing an out-of-school programme for children to be able to focus on studies in the evening after school hours;
- Providing crèches and day-care centres for young children to enable girl students to study while younger siblings under their care are looked after;
- Introducing incentives and scholarships for those students who perform well in schools; and
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation system.

For each sub-activity, the person(s) responsible, the plan starting and completion time and the costs of the plan should be indicated. Care should be taken so that the people identified are able to perform the assigned tasks, that tasks are distributed evenly and that particular individuals are not overloaded. Training programmes that may be required are included in the plan. Time schedules should be defined and organizational structures established.

When all objectives, activities and sub-activities have been described, the cost of each individual activity and sub-activity is estimated to provide a budget. This is a complicated – but also crucial – step in the planning process. Budgeting should be pragmatic and realistic in view of the available funds for the project.

Question 4: How will we know when we arrive? (Monitoring and evaluation)

Monitoring and evaluation of the overall programme and of the various programme activities is essential as an inbuilt activity of the ongoing programme. In this way, implementers can receive essential feedback to check whether the objectives and targets are sufficiently realistic, whether the strategies chosen are effective and/or efficient and whether the organizational structure is adequate to ensure good management. If required, objectives, targets or strategies can be modified to get the best results. However, all stakeholders should be taken into confidence before modifying the objectives, targets and strategies.

In order to enable effective evaluation, it is advisable to incorporate a management information system from the outset. The use of appropriate and valid indicators is essential to assess the baseline situation and the impact of subsequent interventions. In the example given earlier, teachers maintain records of those children who have dropped out of school. Comparing these lists with the number of dropouts before and after the intervention will help to indicate the programme's effectiveness.

Question 5: What new problems do we have? (Forward planning)

At the beginning of the planning process, we may have started with some assumptions. For example: Parents may not be interested in sending their girl children to school. As we proceed, we realize that the parents may be interested but the lack of a safe transportation to the school is resulting in girl children dropping out after a certain age. In this case the solution to girl children dropping out of schools may be providing the area with a mini bus to pick and drop the children from their homes.

Planning is a continuously evolving process, with much emphasis on learning. Initially, we may start with a lot of assumptions, but gradually during the process, we will learn more and more detail which will yield better insight and understanding and, therefore, enable better planning.

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) Briefly explain plan goals, priorities and targets.

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8. PHASES OF PLANNING

Whether the system is an organization, department, business or project intervention, the basic planning process typically includes a similar nature of activities carried out in similar sequence. The phases are carried out carefully or in some cases intuitively, for example, when planning a very small, straightforward effort. The complexity of the various phases depends on the scope of the system. For example, in a large organization, the following phases would be carried out in each division, in each department, in each group, etc. Smaller organizations carry out the same phases in a concise manner with the existing staff.

It is important to remember that different groups of planners might have different names for the following activities and group them differently. However, the nature of the activities and their general sequence remains the same. These phases include:

Referencing the Overall Singular Purpose (“Mission”) or Desired Result from System

During planning, planners have in mind (consciously or unconsciously) some overall purpose or result that the plan is to achieve. All phases of planning will be followed keeping this overall purpose in mind.

Taking Stock Outside and Inside the System

This “taking stock” is always done to some extent, whether consciously or unconsciously. For example, during strategic planning, it is important to conduct an environmental scan. This scan usually involves considering various driving forces or major influences, that might affect the organization or outcome.

Analyzing the Situation

For example, during strategic planning, planners often conduct a “SWOT analysis”. (SWOT is an acronym for considering the organization’s strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats faced by the organization.) During this analysis, planners also can use a variety of assessments or methods to “measure” the health of systems.

Establishing Goals

Based on the analysis and alignment to the overall mission of the system, planners establish a set of goals that build on strengths to take advantage of opportunities, while building up weaknesses and warding off threats.

Establishing Strategies to Reach Goals

The particular strategies (or methods to reach the goals) chosen depend on matters of affordability, practicality and efficiency.

Establishing Objectives

Objectives are selected to be timely and indicative of progress toward goals. These objectives can also be set as you go along working towards the overall goal.

Associating Responsibilities and Timelines with each Objective

Responsibilities are assigned, including for implementation of the plan and for achieving various goals and objectives. Ideally, deadlines are set for meeting each responsibility.

Writing and Communicating a Plan Document

Information is organized and written in a document which is distributed around the system. This helps in defining the role for each participant, while avoiding overlaps and duplication of work.

Acknowledging Completion and Rewarding Success

This critical step is often ignored – which can eventually undermine the success of many of the future planning efforts. The purpose of a plan is to address a current problem or pursue a development goal. It seems simplistic to assert that you should acknowledge if the problem was solved or the goal met. Appreciating or rewarding success is also a crucial aspect. However, this step in the planning process is often ignored. Instead the organization moves on to the next problem to solve or goal to pursue. Skipping this step can cultivate apathy and skepticism – even cynicism – in an organization. So organizations should ensure that this step is included in the planning cycle.

Using Techniques of Making and Implementing a Successful Plan

A common failure in many kinds of planning is that the plan is never really implemented. Instead, all focus is laid on writing a plan document. Too often, the plan sits collecting dust on a shelf, by which time it is too late to be implemented because it is no longer relevant. We now turn our attention to issues to be considered in ensuring that the planning process is carried out completely and implemented properly and deviations from the intended plan are recognized and managed accordingly. Apart from these phases, the following steps are also important in the planning process.

Steps in Planning: Important Considerations

The key steps in the planning process are summarized in the following discussion.

1) Involving the right people in the planning process

This is the key to the success of planning and achieving the desired outcome of any programme. Just as it is important to hire the right people for a job to get the desired results, similarly, it is very important to get the right people into the planning process. While planning, organizations can decide the persons who are going to carry out the different activities planned and who will benefit from the plan. One can get inputs from both these groups of people before making a plan. It may also be meaningful to get inputs from those people who will be responsible to review and authorize the plan.

2) Writing down the planning information and communicating it widely

Very often people who are in the process of outlining the plan do not remember that everyone involved is not familiar with every aspect of the plan. As we go along and part of the plan begins to change, it becomes extremely difficult for people to remember who is supposed to be doing what at what time and according to which version of the plan. The key stakeholders – people in the

organization, funders, clients and beneficiaries may also have different ideas on what is going on at any point of time. Therefore, it is critical to write down the plans in detail and communicate them widely to all the stakeholders.

3) **Making goals Smarter**

Smarter is an acronym, that is, a word composed by joining letters from different words in a phrase or set of words. In this case, a Smarter goal or objective is:

Specific:

- Goals should be specific and expressed in a language that is easier for the person carrying out the task to understand. For example, it is difficult to know what someone should be doing if they are asked to pursue the goal to “work harder”. It is easier to recognize a specific goal such as “Write a paper”.

Measurable:

- Goals should be measurable. Instead of saying ‘Write a paper’ it is preferable to say “Write a 30-page paper”.

Acceptable:

- If one is to take responsibility for pursuit of a goal, the goal should be acceptable to the person. For example, a person is not likely to follow the directions of someone telling him/her to write a 30-page paper when she/he is also working on five other papers. However, the person is involved in setting the goal so that she/he can change her/his other commitments or modify the goal to incorporate other commitments so that she/he is much more likely to accept pursuit of the goal.

Realistic:

- Even if a person does accept the responsibility to pursue a goal that is specific and measurable, there is no point if the goal is not realistic. For example, if you ask someone to “Write a 30-page paper in the next 10 minutes,” he or she will not be able to do it.

Time frame:

- Committing to a realistic goal to “Write a 30-page paper in one month” is good. However, it will mean more to others (particularly if they are planning to help or participate in the process) if you specify that we will write one page a day for 30 days, rather than including the possibility that we will write all 30 pages on the last day of the 30-day period.

Extending:

- The goal should stretch the performer's capabilities. For example, one might be more interested in writing a 30-page paper if the topic of the paper interests the writer or the way that one writes it will extend his or her capabilities.

Rewarding:

- A person is more inclined to write the paper if he or she might be rewarded for the effort.

4) **Building in Accountability (Regularly Reviewing Who is Doing What and By When?)**

Plans should specify who is responsible for achieving each result, including goals and objectives. Dates should be set for completion of each result as well. Responsible parties should regularly review status of the plan. Be sure to have someone of authority “sign off” on the plan, including putting their signature on the plan to indicate that they agree with and support its contents. Include responsibilities in policies, procedures, job descriptions, performance review processes, etc.

5) **Noting deviations from the plan and re-planning accordingly**

It is acceptable to deviate from the plan. The plan is not a set of rules. It is an overall guideline. As important as following the plan is, the aspect of noticing deviations and adjusting the plan accordingly is of equal importance.

6) **Evaluating the planning process and the plan**

During the planning process, regularly collect feedback from participants. Do they agree with the planning process? If not, what is it that they do not like and how could it be done better? In large, ongoing planning processes (such as strategic planning, project planning, etc.), it is critical to collect this kind of feedback regularly.

During regular reviews of implementation of the plan, assess if goals are being achieved or not. If not, were goals realistic? Do responsible parties have the resources necessary to achieve the goals and objectives? Should goals be changed? Should more priority be placed on achieving the goals? What needs to be done?

Finally, it is important to write down how the planning process could have been done better. The points noted for further improvement should be considered the next time when the planning process is conducted.

7) **Conducting a Recurring Planning Process is at least as important as the Plan Document**

Far too often, primary emphasis is placed on the plan document. This is extremely unfortunate because the real treasure of planning is the planning process itself. During planning, planners learn a great deal from ongoing analysis, reflection, discussion, debates and dialogue around issues and goals in the system. Far too often, people put emphasis on written codes of ethics and codes of conduct. While these documents certainly are important, at least as important is conducting ongoing communications around these documents. The ongoing communications are what sensitize people to understanding and following the values and behaviours suggested in the codes.

8) **Acknowledging Results**

It is easy for planners to become tired and even cynical about the planning process. One of the reasons for this problem is that far too often, emphasis is placed on achieving results. Once the desired results are achieved, new ones are quickly established. The process can seem like having to solve one problem after another, with no real end in sight. Yet when one really thinks about it, it is a major accomplishment to carefully analyze a situation, involve others in a plan to do something about it, work together to carry out the plan and actually see some results. Achievements must be acknowledged.

8.8 PITFALLS OF PLANNING

The main pitfall of planning – the one from which all others derive – is falling into the delusion that planning can determine outcome. In fact, planning cannot guarantee the outcome desired. Instead, it can help to achieve something integral to any future success: readiness to recognize and face the challenges, obstacles and barriers.

A) **Planning is only as good as the information on which it is based**

Too often, groups rely on untested assumptions or hunches, erecting their plans on unsteady ground. Everyone “just knows” there will be no problem getting a distributor for a video or that it would be impossible to find funding for a new facility; or it is “obvious” that a part-time person would suffice to accomplish a brand-new and much needed task. It is the obvious things that everyone is familiar with that are most likely to create problems. It is worth the extra time to test assumptions and hunches against reality.

B) **Planning is not magic – one can not always get what one wants**

The process of planning is one of research and investigation. Results can no more be predetermined than can the outcome of a scientific experiment. Planning is only a tool that can help one decide whether to go forward, not just how. If the answers to key questions are “no”, then the outcome of planning should be to postpone the contemplated intervention, working toward readiness to tackle it farther down the road.

C) **Be adaptable**

Some planners see themselves as creating a blueprint, building a future the way one builds a house. If things do not go according to plan, they blame other people’s failure to identify with the programme. Rather than planning as if the future were pre-determined, we should plan for flexibility. Plans that cannot be changed should not be written.

D) **Putting planning in its place and time**

Some groups do not recognize that it takes time and effort to plan well. They want results, but are not able or willing to make the investment. They end up in the worst of both worlds: their ongoing work is set back because they took time to plan without thinking through the implications; and their too-rushed plans end up with half-baked ideas. It is important to be realistic about what can be invested. Finding a way to plan within available resources – time, energy, money is crucial.

E) **Planning can become a substitute for action**

Sometimes, planning takes up so much time and resources. It is important, therefore, to keep an eye on the timeframe and plan in a way that execution becomes necessary and possible.

F) **Writing it up**

Sometimes organizations have great face-to-face planning experiences: good discussions, moments of profound insight, the excitement of contemplating future possibility, the elation of a meeting of the minds. But feelings do not last long: they need to be carried forward into action, guided by a written plan. Some planning documents are so vague, abstract and general; they are useless to the people who invested so much in considering their futures. Typically, an aim is listed – “become self-sufficient in five years” – and beneath it, phrases suggesting a range of ways to advance that aim to: “expand earned income,” “secure individual and group savings,” “develop women’s self help groups.” As time goes by and the memory of the face-to-face experience fades, the planning document’s generalities are

drained of any meaning that might once have clung to them. If one takes the time to plan, it should be conducted properly, talking through alternative scenarios for realizing aims; mapping out ways to test them; concretizing guiding values, deadlines and ways to evaluate experiments.

G) Flexibility in planning

Some planners opt for a “model” approach. It is not that other organizations’ experiences are not relevant to one’s own. But it is always good to remember that what works for someone may not work in one’s context and situation. Plans can be based on other’s experiences, but scope should be provided for challenges and questions that arise on the way to execution.

Box 8.1: Gender Budgeting

The Five Step Framework for Gender Budgeting

Gender Budgeting is a tool to incorporate gender concerns in the planning process.

Step 1: An analysis of the situation for women and men and girls and boys (and the different sub-groups) in a given sector

Step 2: An assessment of the extent to which the sector’s policy addresses the gender issues and gaps described in the first step. This step should include an assessment of the relevant legislation, policies, programmes and schemes. It includes an analysis of both the written policy as well as the implicit policy reflected in government activities. It should examine the extent to which these policies, programmes and schemes meet the socioeconomic and other rights of women.

Step 3: An assessment of the adequacy of budget allocations to implement the gender-sensitive policies and programmes identified in Step 2 above.

Step 4: Monitoring whether the money was spent as planned, what was delivered and to whom. This involves checking both financial performance and the physical deliverables (disaggregated by sex).

Step 5: An assessment of the impact of the policy/programme/scheme and the extent to which the situation described in step 1 has been changed, in the direction of greater gender equality.

The pre-requisites for gender budgeting are mainly gender orientation and sensitization, disaggregated data on budgetary allocations, participatory planning, spatial mapping, gender appraisals for all new programmes and schemes, preparing guidelines for review of public expenditure and policy, analysis of public expenditure and outcome assessments of budgets.

Source: UNIFEM-UNFPA Gender Responsive Budgeting and Women’s Reproductive Rights

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 one reason and find out why it is considered as a pitfall.

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8.9 SUMMING UP

Economic planning is considered as an effective method to utilize resources optimally and bring intended development. The Unit summarized three major reasons for planning: Helping to clarify, focus and research; providing a considered and logical framework and offering a benchmark for performance measurement.

Planning can be conducted at macro or micro (regional) levels. Planning at the central and peripheral levels should not be considered separate exercises but complementary ones. The process of formulating plans should focus on situation analysis; setting priorities, goals and targets; specifying strategy organization and management; detailing monitoring and evaluation and planning for future situations/problems encountered during implementation.

The activities involved in different phases of planning include: referencing the 'mission' or desired result from the system; taking stock; analyzing the situation; establishing goals; establishing strategies to reach goals; establishing objectives; associating responsibilities and timelines with each objective; writing and communicating a plan document; acknowledging completion and rewarding success; using techniques of making and implementing a successful plan.

8.10 GLOSSARY

District Planning : If the state Plans are to succeed, their formulation in relation to physical features and resources and the institutional organizations in each area is the first requirement. Development needs not only financial resources and material inputs but personnel and the right kind of institutions. This requirement has to be worked out for each operational area. The natural corollary of beginning to plan realistically and from the bottom is to recognize that planning is not something that comes from outside or above but what each state, district, locality and community does to develop its own resources and potentialities.

8.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) The main reasons for undertaking local/micro level planning are as follows:
 - Specific attention may be given to the needs of the targeted groups;
 - Programmes are geared more towards the specific needs of the area;
 - Efforts are being made to decentralize the planning process;
 - A closer partnership with the people and the planners can be established; and
 - The lowest echelons of the administration can be organized and coordinated.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) The constraints and the proposed actions to overcome them – as identified in the situation analysis – become the building blocks for the action plan. To

begin with, we have to outline the objective of the programme. An “objective” is defined as the action that is proposed to overcome a constraint or problem that has been identified during a situation analysis. As much as possible, objectives should be stated in ways that will make them measurable. The objectives should also include a time frame. For example, assume that the needs assessment showed a high prevalence of school dropouts among girls. The constraint is, “Less than 20% of all schoolchildren aged 10-15 years complete primary school in a particular area”. The objective is, “to make sure that at least 80% of all schoolchildren are there in primary schools by 2020”. It may not be possible to address all constraints and therefore priorities must be set as to what to tackle first and what later. Aims, objectives and targets must be realistic, keeping in mind the available human, infrastructure and financial resources. Overambitious programmes often result in activities not being completed in time or at all, targets not being met and objectives not being achieved.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Planning is not magic – you cannot always get what you want. The process of planning is one of research and investigation. Results can no more be predetermined than can the outcome of a scientific experiment. Planning is only a tool that can help you decide whether to go forward, not just how. If the answers to key questions are “no,” then the outcome of planning should be to postpone the contemplated expansion, working toward readiness to tackle it farther down the road. That is the reason it is considered as a pitfall.

8.12 REFERENCES

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8.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) Discuss the steps involved in the planning process.
- 2) Identify any one type of plan which you think will address gender concerns and explain briefly.
- 3) Write an essay about the phases of planning.