



**INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

## **Appreciation Programme**

# **Participatory Integrated District Planning in Local Government**

## **Module - III**

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## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture continues to employ a major section of the population of developing nations. To make this sector more inclusive, participatory agricultural planning becomes essential. Being a sector with a huge number of people from the poorer classes, this planning process has become a medium for them to express their demands - something that has not been possible in centralized agricultural planning.

The process of participatory planning is quite similar to that of integrated district planning. But the fact that it is concerned with a specialized area, pushes for the need to constitute specialized planning units in the village, block and district levels. They are the Village-level Agricultural Planning Unit, the Block-level Agricultural Planning Unit and the District-level Planning Unit respectively.

Agricultural planning also demands a participatory process in the drafting of the Comprehensive District Agricultural Plan, with the inputs of farmers, scientists etc. Environment building involves appraising all the stakeholders on the need towards a participatory approach. Through the district agricultural vision, one formulates a goal towards which all the steps in planning should converge.

## OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives of this module are to understand:

- Relevance of participation in agricultural planning
- Formulation of the district agricultural vision
- Steps involved in participatory agricultural planning
- Functions of agricultural planning units in village, block and district levels

## Unit 1: Participatory Agricultural Planning

### 1.1 Introduction

Failure of many traditional agricultural development plans and programmes has pushed the move to conduct participatory agricultural planning. Successful community development programmes based on participatory planning, implementation and monitoring processes have demonstrated that rural communities are not only interested in development but they have skills and knowledge to do so. However, it is observed that those plans and projects succeed, so long as those they respond to local contexts and priorities. Finally, the push for democratization and inclusion has added an important political dimension to the demand for more participatory and bottom-up planning (FAO, 1999).

Agricultural planning has two basic objectives:

- i) to provide information for more inclusive levels of planning by means of participatory problem analysis
- ii) to set community priorities and formulate action plans that can be carried out either independently or with external assistance

Agricultural planning is an attempt to design an action plan for the development of the local area in general; and in particular, agriculture and allied sectors like fisheries and animal husbandry. Participatory agricultural planning is to enable the optimum utilisation of scarce natural and financial resources with the involvement of various stakeholders.

Participatory agriculture based plans can be prepared for the entire district, through a bottom-up approach and these can be integrated into the agricultural plans, at a higher level. The process of agricultural planning involves both participatory, as well as spatial planning tools and methods.

The Planning Commission of India in 2008, introduced a manual for participatory agricultural planning entitled 'Comprehensive District Agricultural Plan (CDAP) (Planning Commission, 2008). In the following sections, we shall attempt to understand the process of participatory district agricultural planning, illustrated through an example of CDAP of in the Durg district, state of Chhattisgarh.

## 1.2 Comprehensive District Agricultural Planning Process

The methodology of CDAP has focused on understanding the latent potential of the district under development, through a statistical profile of the area. These potentials are important factors in the consideration of developing a district vision. Identification of the initiatives required to attain this vision are treated as goals to be achieved, with available, as well as additional resources. A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is an important tool to prepare a holistic analysis of the factors that need consideration in this process of planning.

A District Agricultural Planning Unit (DAPU), Block Agricultural Planning Unit (BAPU) and Village Agricultural Planning Unit (VAPU) will need to be constituted. Members of these units shall consist of elected representatives, agriculture and allied department functionaries, NGOs, members of special interest groups etc.

A district agricultural planning process would comprise the following stages:

## 1.3 Environment Building

The participatory process of preparing the CDAP should involve all the stakeholders, including government officials, political leaders, elected representatives, subject matter experts, CSOs and the beneficiaries.

*Prepare a flow chart of process and institutions involved in agricultural planning in your country to better understand your local context*

A series of consultative meetings must be organized and moderated by an experienced facilitator, whose role includes:

- ensuring participation of all the representatives, especially the marginalised, as well as women
- developing a common understanding of all stakeholders on the planning process
- Obtaining a unanimous decision on the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the CDAP
- providing a thorough appraisal on the new methods of planning to be used
- attempting to break traditional attitudes towards participatory planning
- encouraging technical experts to integrate local knowledge and experience in the development of plans

These consultative workshops should be organised at each tier of local government beginning from the state or province.

#### **1.4 Formulation of District Vision**

The district consultation and visioning exercise meeting should be attended by all stakeholders, including district level senior officers of all the line departments, district *panchayat* members, District Planning Committee (DPC), Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and technical experts.

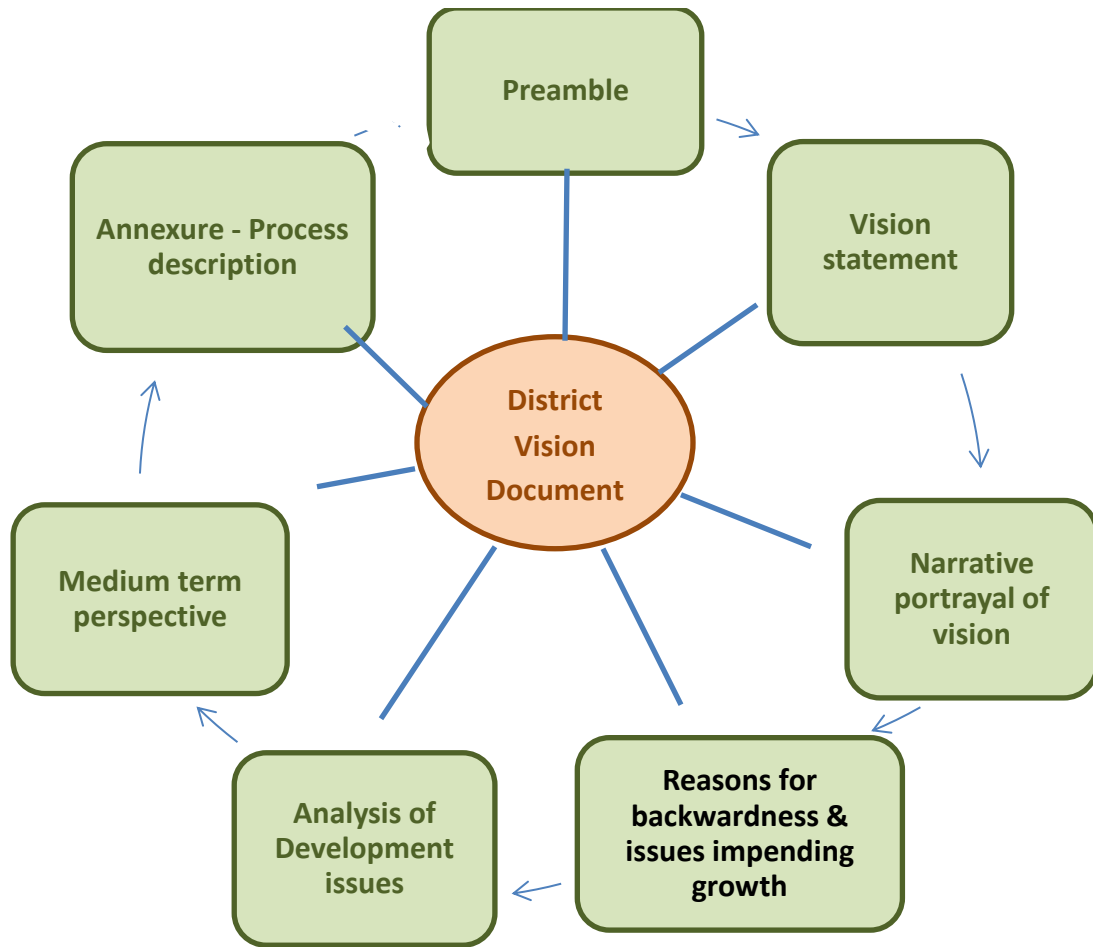
Similarly, block level orientation and consultation meetings must also be organised.

The district vision should be an articulation of three important aspects of development:

- Human development
- Infrastructure and production, leading to sustainable and improved productivity
- Employment and hazard free agricultural growth, including horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries.

The vision document prepared in a participatory manner, will serve to ensure its ownership by all stakeholders. It will foster cooperation and teamwork among the inhabitants of the area.

The aspirations and developmental requirements of the district need to be broadly defined, setting a specific period for achievements. The process involved in preparing the various components of the vision document is illustrated below.



The vision document for agricultural development should:

- 1) Reflect people's aspirations
- 2) Discuss potential for increased productivity in agriculture
- 3) Highlight available technologies and requirements for additional research
- 4) Identify key reasons impeding agricultural development.

### Durg District Agri–Vision 2020

The 'Vision 2020' for the district Durg is derived through the assimilation of these pre-defined goals.

- Self-reliance in agriculture and allied sectors through increased yield and productivity, including establishing seed banks at block levels, irrigation methods
- Increase in the incomes of landless laborers and farmers through enhanced productivity
- Educated and unemployed youth to be encouraged to pursue agriculture as a profitable occupation
- To make all the farmers in the district aware of optimal and scientific utilization of natural resources, while enhancing farm production
- Animal husbandry to include livestock improvement, through breed upgradation of farm animals, encourage establishment of fisheries, poultry farming, piggeries and cattle rearing
- To recognize the role, and contribution of women farmers, ensure their participation in programmes, as well as inclusion of their specific needs and necessities
- Every single farm would become a self-sustaining unit

(District Planning Committee, 2009)

## **1.5 Information Needs And Analysis**

The basic statistics of the district are used to develop the indices, which would describe the present status of the district, as compared to the state and the country. Based on SWOT analysis, the needs and core sectors for focus are identified, with a view to their further development. The district vision is prepared and circulated to concerned officials for discussion at various levels.



## SWOT ANALYSIS FOR DURG DISTRICT

Agriculture	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable climate, soil types and topography available for the production of a variety of agricultural and horticultural crops</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 percent small and fragmented landholdings is a big hurdle towards the adoption of improved and mechanized farming system.</li> <li>• Inadequate irrigation facilities in some blocks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High potential to increase cropping intensity to 250 percent</li> <li>• Provision and implementation of better post-harvest management system</li> <li>• encourage farmers to take up horticultural crops</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High dependency on chemical fertilizers.</li> <li>• Increasing occupation avenues in other sectors and lack of interest among young farmers in the agricultural and allied activities</li> <li>• Rapidly receding ground water table levels</li> </ul>
Animal Husbandry	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assured demand of milk and other products in urban centers like Durg and Bhilai</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominance of nondescript over the crossbred cattle population.</li> <li>• Fodder development and feed supply is bare minimal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vast opportunities for increased employment in rural areas, specially to landless households through adoption of animal husbandry</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing industrial and mining activity further depletes grazing land</li> </ul>
Women Participation	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher women literacy rate as compared to state and country's average</li> <li>• Significant share in the total workforce, especially agriculture</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate remuneration against significant contribution in workforce</li> <li>• Poor extension services and training programmes for women farmers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More focus on the capacity building of women SHGs. Better training for women in agricultural and allied activities to enhance their income and strengthen their decision-making capacities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing violence against women.</li> <li>• Migration of male counterparts to other regions for better employment opportunities, leading to more work pressure on women in the family.</li> </ul>

(District Planning Committee, 2009)

## Unit 2: Formulation of District Agricultural Plan

### 2.1 Introduction

The envisioning and stock taking exercise is followed by a planning exercise at each local government level and then consolidated into an integrated agricultural plan for the district. The plan emphasises mutual reinforcement of all agricultural and allied programmes and ensures the optimum utilisation of resources, as per the prioritised needs.

### 2.2 Formulation Of Plan

Basic information is collected from all the village panchayats by the survey team, in order to assess their needs, potential, resource availability and problems that they face. Micro-planning exercises are also organised in all village panchayats. The respective line departments develop sectoral plans with block-specific interventions.

- a) For effective planning at the village *panchayat* level, the village assembly (*Gram Sabha*) has to function effectively. Their meetings would have to be representative of all people living in a *Gram Panchayat*. It is suggested that the following steps are carried out to ensure quality participation in the village assembly. Dates for meetings are to be determined by the village *panchayat*.
- b) Adequate information of the same is done through display of notices in public places.
- c) Special interest groups such as self-help groups (SHGs), NGOs, libraries, schools, cooperatives etc. to attend the meetings
- d) Members of the village assembly to be divided into smaller groups for discussion
- e) Wherever feasible, attendance register with details, photographs, videography to be maintained
- f) Planning teams (BAPU/VAPU) get the basic data collected and analysed with the help of technical experts and decide the interventions required for viable and cost effective activities based on the characteristics of all natural and financial resources available

The facilitators must systematically organise the process into the following steps:

**Step 1:** Collection and analysis of *panchayat* wise primary data.

**Step 2:** Discussion with the village *panchayats* and groups based on agro-ecological conditions and major activities.

**Step 3:** Developing options for each classified sector - agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, plantation and horticulture.

**Step 4:** Locating and matching the resources with the needs identified in the above steps.

**Step 5:** Approval of the village *panchayat* plan by the elected body.

The technical experts will support the process by meeting with members of different levels of local governments (*panchayats* in this case), farmers' groups, NGOs, credit institutions, experts from agricultural universities etc. and carry out a detailed analysis and design for developing the sector using primary and secondary data collected.

### 2.3 Resource Pooling

Resources available from various on-going programmes and schemes in the district, such as

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS)
- Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)
- Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY)
- Bharat Nirmaan
- Externally aided projects
- MP and MLA local area development funds
- Private sector initiatives in the area
- Private and foreign aids are to be considered while preparing the plan

*Prepare a list of cross-sectoral schemes and programmes, which are funding the agriculture sector in your country*

Each village *Panchayat* should be free to allocate resources in accordance with the assessed needs.

Once an assessment of these has taken place at the *panchayat* level, a process of linking each need to the source of funding can be adopted as described below:

**i) Classifying Each Need Into A Matrix**

Each need will have to be classified sector wise. This will involve prioritising the needs, identifying and suggesting ways to augment the local resources of the panchayats.

**ii) Assigning Specific Purpose Grants**

Each need has to be assigned resources in order of their priority.

**iii) Assigning part-untied funds**

Partly untied funds are assigned under sectors like education, agriculture etc. but with no particular directives of how to utilise them. They allow for a certain measure of convergence with other schemes. These funds can be used as gap fillers, within specified limits.

**iv) Assigning Untied Funds**

Untied funds are for those works that are not covered by any schemes at the district level. These funds are usually provided for filling gaps in funding that has proven to be insufficient. The village *panchayat* has the discretion to decide where to assign this money. But, ideally, the allotment of untied funds should correlate with the priorities.

## **2.4 Integration Of Plans**

The next level of agricultural planning would involve a block level integration of various *panchayat* level plans. The process of prioritisation should be undertaken on the basis of the demands. Inter-*panchayat* needs like connectivity, power supply etc. needs consolidation with the other plans.

### Integration of plans

- Durg district *panchayat* and municipality may decide together to provide space to farmers for selling agricultural produce like fruits and vegetables, on weekends so that they may get better price for their produce, without the involvement of middlemen
- Planning for protection of rural water bodies and agricultural land from urban sewage and toxic waste disposal by the industries in Durg
- District *Panchayat* Durg provides resources for the construction of a farmer-training centre, which may benefit farmers of all the blocks.

### **Integration Of Block Level Plans Into A District Plan**

Sector wise aggregation of block plans and moderation is to be followed by identification of inter block proposals like construction of link roads covering many blocks. After technical scrutiny and validation, the plans will be placed before the district *panchayat* for approval. It is expected that at the district level, the DAPU will constitute a technical advisory group to analyse the data and coordinate with experts, to finalise the plan for each sector. This advisory group may consist of line department officials, technical experts, NGO etc. Only after the approval by the block level *panchayat*, shall the plan be forwarded to the District Planning Committee (DPC).

### **2.5 Approval Of Plan**

The district agricultural plan prepared by DAPU should be considered in detail by the DPC, to ensure that there has to be only one district plan prepared through a common planning process and not a set of separate plans prepared in accordance with the guidelines of each programme. Technical advisory groups may provide their assessments to the DPC. During the process of consolidation, the DPC should verify whether the plans of local governments match the priorities outlined in their vision documents.

### **Comprehensive District Agriculture Plan, Durg**

A major revival package is essential for the growth and development of agriculture and allied sectors, which are linked to higher investment and strategies, to make agriculture attractive and profitable. Different strategies in combination with technology, credit, marketing, risk management and institutional support would be required to revitalize the agricultural economy of the district. Innovative schemes have been suggested for promotion of organic farming, soil health maintenance, integrated farming system and diversification.

(District Planning Committee, 2009)

## **2.6 Monitoring Of Plan Implementation**

In order to monitor implementation of the plan, quarterly review of physical and financial progress is necessary. This is to be conducted at all levels of governance and the results must be made public. The following tools may be used for the effective monitoring of the implementation of the plan:

- 1) Social audit
- 2) Right To Information
- 3) Proactive disclosure of information
- 4) Reporting to village assembly (*gram sabha*) by implementing agencies, or government departments involved
- 5) Public tracking of disbursement and utilisation of funds

## Summary

In this Module, we have tried to explain the process of integrated district planning in the framework of a participatory agricultural plan. It has been observed that farmers and other stakeholders are not well informed about the complex processes of preparation of plans for agricultural development programmes. The acceptance of farmers, including women farmers and other community members, as repertoires of knowledge and wealth of practical experience and insights, is essential for the growth and development of the agriculture sector as a whole.

A participatory planning process and the involvement of all the stakeholders in the process are important to achieve the desired results. We learnt about formulation of 'District Agricultural Vision' and 'Agricultural Plan', as well as the implementation and monitoring of plans. These processes are not without their fair share of challenges, which may range from participation to technical knowhow.

In the next Module, we try to understand these challenges in detail, as well as explore the solutions to the same.

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