



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

International Perspectives in Participatory Research

Unit 5

**Participatory Methods of Analysing, Disseminating and
Utilizing Knowledge**

Units of Certificate in International Perspectives in Participatory Research

Unit 1: Understanding Social Research

- Meaning of Research
- Dominant Social Research Paradigms
- Issues in Knowledge Production and Knowledge Utilization Underlying Social Research Paradigms
- Critique of the Dominant Social Research Paradigms

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Introduction

People are active participants in knowledge generation and the use of that knowledge. The participatory research (PR) approach recognises the agency of people. When people actively engage in the reflective processes and engage in knowledge generation, they are able to analyse their situations and take action accordingly; and also disseminate the findings useful to the community in myriad ways. Unit 5 is about participatory methods of analysing, disseminating and utilising knowledge. Section 5.1 will explain the participatory methods of analysis. Section 5.2 will describe participatory modes of dissemination and Section 5.3 will highlight the issues associated with utilisation strategies to affect change.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- *Understand* various participatory methods of analysis;
- *Explain* participatory modes of dissemination; and
- *Comprehend* the issues associated with utilisation strategies to affect change.

5.1 Participatory Methods of Analysing

Data are the raw material that in itself has no meaning. To make it meaningful and get results it needs to be first analysed and then interpreted. The analysis process generally involves *identifying* the categories of responses found in the raw data; *sifting* it in order to separate important and significant pieces of information from that which is less significant and important, and also *deliberating* with key stakeholders as to why some information is more important and what it means for local planning, project activities, policy recommendations, etc. When information is analysed by relating it back to concrete situations in order to establish explanations and lessons for decisions, new authentic *knowledge* emerges.

Participatory analysis, therefore, has several functions:

- *Refine understanding* by discussing initial information with project stakeholders so that more refined insights can emerge;
- *Limit biases* through a thorough discussion so that information is crosschecked and the stakeholders are able to clearly point out any issue that has been represented incorrectly;
- *Build a clear picture of a situation/event/process and reach consensus* by discussing data. This way contradictions and gaps are identified, understood and filled;
- *Strengthen ownership of the conclusions*. Joint analysis motivates stakeholders to invest more in making changes happen (IFAD, 2000).

5.1.1 Understanding Types of Data

It helps to have an understanding of the results that may emerge when we begin to analyse data. We may gather **quantitative** or **qualitative** data.

Quantitative data describes a situation by using numbers. This data could be actual numbers; for example, the number of events held with community members, the number of services provided to them, the amount of material produced by community action for change. The quantitative data could also be some numbers that represent the relationship among concepts; for example, the numbers that express the rates (e.g., in a six-point scale) or ranks of opinions, feelings, skills, and knowledge. This type of data is collected through a survey questionnaire, an evaluation form, a test (e.g., knowledge test), or some of the project's outputs. The most common quantitative findings could be total numbers, percentages, frequencies, averages, ratios, ranks, and orders.

Qualitative data takes the form of ideas, words, texts, or stories that explain a situation. This type of data is typically collected when project participants describe the situation in their own words through formal or informal conversations, interviews or focus group discussions. Qualitative information can be presented in several forms such as themes, patterns, concepts, lists of commonalities and differences, definitions of approaches and attitudes and anecdotes, which support the data.

These two types of data are analysed separately by using different skills and techniques, but the results of the analysis can be combined when interpreting the results and making conclusions. The analysis of qualitative information is very different and at times more difficult than that of quantitative data.

Participatory research (PR), as the previous units have shown, intertwines research with action through a conscious and deliberate iterative, adaptive cyclic or spiral process, which alternates between action and critical reflection. It balances problem-solving with the identification and development of opportunities. The process of analysis is, therefore,

- Predominantly qualitative (sorting, scoring, ranking, weighting, drawing);
- Iterative and optimises trade-offs between needed information and representativeness;
- Context specific. Therefore, statistically significant and generalised conclusions may not be possible; and
- Differentiated research questions to enable analyses relevant to both men and women and to different social groups (CGIAR, 2003).

5.1.2 Methods of Analysis

The choice of analysis methods depends on the objective and focus of research. Researchers do not attempt to manipulate processes; instead they seek to observe processes in their natural state in order to capture what actually happened. The methods of analysis are, therefore, context-sensitive.

Quantitative methods like cost-benefit analysis are inappropriate for assessing the relationships and processes and are often at odds with the objectives within community based action research. Multiple methods are particularly effective in shedding light on the different aspects of empirical reality. The single method data collection (and single data sources) often oversimplify and distort information, and fail to identify the underlying dynamic processes. Multiple methods and data sources increase the probability of an in-depth understanding, thus, enhancing the validity of the analysis to capture the diversity of views about objectives, criteria and outcomes from a variety of stakeholders.

Given the importance of participant perception, learning and interaction in PR, the analysis must be informed by the voices of the participants themselves. It must also take account of the inter-subjectivity within the data collection process, reflecting on the researcher's own identity, how the participants interpret the researcher's identity and how the researcher interprets the participants' identities. However, as with any rigorous social research process, analysis must pay careful attention to the sample selection, and the validity and reliability of the data collected.

Participatory research applies the “triangulation principle”. It combines multiple sources of information and methods, and links together various knowledge worlds through participatory learning and joint enquiry.

Triangulation

One important aspect of using participatory techniques is confirming and validating responses. As the information gathered is anecdotal and sample sizes are determined by factors other than statistical viability, confirmation and validation cannot be achieved through statistical analysis. Triangulation is used to confirm information gathered through participatory methods. Triangulation is done by approaching the same topic from different points of view, using different questions, or asking different people the same questions. If responses are consistent, it is assumed that the information given is reasonably valid.

Frequently, triangulation is thought of as a data gathering strategy, but it is also an important principle for data analysis. There are four forms of triangulation.

- The **first** is *data triangulation*. This uses multiple sources of data to show or support the same fact or interpretation. For example: a woman may report that she participated in all group meetings. It would be wise to triangulate on that for example, by looking at, the minutes of the meetings in question, or asking other members.
- The **second** is *researcher triangulation*. This is a form of cross-checking between multiple researchers to see if their interpretations and conclusions agree.
- The **third** is *theory triangulation*. Here other theories that might account for the findings are looked for.
- The **fourth** is *methodological triangulation*; here findings from different research methods are compared to see how they mesh with one another. This can be as simple as, for example, asking different focus groups the same questions or comparing the outputs of a map and transect of the same area. The participatory process of analysis by and large entails methodological triangulation.

NOTE BANK: An Example of Methodological Triangulation

A development research project on the gender implications of rural energy technologies, in terms of saving women's time and labour in the management of household energy systems, used both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide an in-depth perspective of the problems.

The quantitative approach of research was principally based on a household survey design, which used a standardised questionnaire. Household surveys were integrated with participatory research methods with an emphasis on a gender analysis framework. Additional primary data was gathered from key people such as women's group leaders, community leaders, the village elders, energy development group, promoters/facilitators, project staff members and professionals through participatory research methods. Information collected through quantitative approaches was analysed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools and techniques. Qualitative information was categorised thematically according to groups of parameters and interpreted descriptively. The triangulation of methods helped to avoid any biases in data sources such as household survey and participatory research methods and they were used in conjunction with the evidence supported through the review of literature.

Focus group discussions, conducted separately with men's and women's groups, helped to gather information about their views and opinions about rural energy technologies, their likes and dislikes, acceptance and rejection, their interests and needs and so on. Differentiating between women and men in a discussion may empower women, since they may feel more confident about confronting their issues within their own group rather than in a mixed group. The selection criteria of selecting group participants from different men's and women's groups ensured the representation of different ethnicities, literate and illiterate people and user groups of different technologies.

Direct observation enabled understanding about the different aspects surrounding gender and energy technologies and contextual information in the area. For visualising linkages between the spatial parameters and location-specific activity (for example, level of gender awareness and the problems in adoption of rural energy technologies in different villages), direct observation provided an opportunity to understand the situation and supplement the information collected through other sources.

An Activity Profile prepared with groups of women of different ethnicities using different technologies helped to comprehend the workload of women and the time availability for them to be involved in any social and economic activities.

Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM) was used in order to see the positive and negative implications of Alternative Energy Technologies (AETs) on men and women. The aim was to find out the impact of AETs on the women's workloads and on their time, resources and culture. Initially talks were conducted with a women's group and then separately with a men's group in order to get their views about the implications of AETs on women and men. Later, the analysis was shared with a mixed group of men and women to determine whether the decisions of men and women in a mixed group differed from those in separate groups. Finally, all the matrices were combined and a single matrix was developed showing the positive and negative implications of AETs on men and women.

Interviews with Key Individuals like the Village Development Committee leader, women's group leaders, village elders, school teachers, foresters, who were believed to have a detailed knowledge of the current situation were undertaken. This kind of interview was conducted in a very informal way in order to get both complementary and supplementary information on gender and energy issues. The perceptions and attitudes of those interviewed regarding gender roles in energy management, traditional versus alternative energy technologies and development problems and potentials were discussed in detail. Some issues, which appeared to be important during the survey, were further explored with the key participants. In order to guide this kind of interview, a checklist was prepared of the agendas under discussion.

Consultation with Various Government/Non-Government Agencies working in the rural energy sector helped to get a broader view and opinion on policy matters, rural energy issues and problems and potentials. Consultation was in the form of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. This kind of interview helped to get a broader perspective on policy matters, practical problems in programme implementation, and the potential. The researcher's role was to be passive, she/he had to start a theme /topic and let the interviewees develop their ideas and pursue their own train of thought. Under the semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed but she/he has to be prepared to be more flexible while talking about the issues.

Data obtained through various approaches was cross checked to verify the information obtained from both methods. For instance, the accuracy of survey data was verified through the information received from the focus group discussions and interviews with key informants. Where information related to income and expenditure was concerned, women were reluctant to provide factual information. However, during the focus group discussions, such inaccuracies were checked. Any biases observed through different data sources were picked and appropriate measures were taken to avoid such biases.

(Mahat, 2009)

5.1.3 Process of Analysis

Data analysis in PR is an ongoing process. This contrasts with conventional survey methods in which the collection and analysis of information are two distinct phases in the research process. Iteration in data analysis does not refer to a repetitive mechanical analytical process, but to a reflexive process to develop meaning.

Analysis is led by an inductive approach. The patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis. However, patterns, themes, and categories do not emerge on their own. They are driven by what the researcher wants to know and how the researcher

interprets what the data are telling her or him according to subscribed theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological positions, and intuitive field understandings. Analysis is, therefore, like a loop-like pattern of multiple rounds of revisiting the data as additional questions emerge, new connections are unearthed, and more complex formulations develop along with a deepening understanding of the material (Srivastava, 2009).

The approach to analysis can be looked at in at least two ways. One is that the information is analysed when all of it is collected, so that the data can be looked at as a whole. The other is that the information is analysed as one goes along so that one is able to adjust one's thinking about what information is actually needed, and adjust the programme to respond to the information that is being obtained. Approaches to analysis in fact depend on the research/programme's purpose. If one is more concerned with a summative analysis, i.e., finding out whether the approach was effective, one might be more inclined towards the first approach. If one is oriented toward improvement, a formative analysis, gathering information along the way would be ideal. Both approaches are legitimate, but ongoing data collection and review can particularly lead to improvement in our work.

In PR, analysis occurs *simultaneously and iteratively* with data collection, data interpretation and report writing. Most of the PRA and popular methods as discussed in Unit 4 facilitate analysis by helping local people work through relationships between different variables. The process of data analysis includes a number of steps. These are listed below.

Review: The whole range of data generated from various participatory methods is brought together and organised to see the range of information available on community priorities, capacities and activities. The reliability of each piece of evidence is considered to resolve contradictions where possible. The review of generated data may reveal gaps in the data which could be filled before moving further.

Summarise: After the review the most reliable and important points of evidence are summarised to give an overview of the community's situation and priorities for action.

Interrogation: Various questions are now asked and answers put forward. For example, is the picture given in the summary a realistic one? Is there consensus or conflict? Are there any factors which need to be taken into account?

Learn: Interrogations and reflections enable understanding the community's major priorities, the ways in which they are being addressed and the need for external support.

Actions: The analysis should conclude with actions which are to be taken as a result of the lessons learnt. (IFAD, 2000)

NOTE BANK: Steps in Participatory Data Analysis

Analysing information begins with a review of all the collected data to find the emerging themes or patterns. The five key evaluation questions provide useful categories around which the information should be grouped and themes developed. Look for and record the information that is in the data about how well the project is doing, what is working, what should be done differently and what difference it is making. Once the material has been grouped into themes, it can be analysed to see how the results compare to the changes that were expected as identified by the success indicators. Take the time to reflect on what the analysis reveals. What was learned to answer the questions "what", "why", "so what", "now what" and "then what"? People who have been involved in the project should be involved in the interpretation of the findings. This helps to avoid biases that result from one person's interpretation of information.

The final analysis looks at the information that has been gathered through several different lenses. The process of analysis roughly follows the following steps.

Telling the Story. This step is largely descriptive, laying out the situation in the community and focusing on the issues which comprise the core objectives of the study. As the situation is described, the most important and/or predominant patterns that were uncovered during the study are pulled out so that the stakeholders are not lost in a mass of undigested details. One, however, needs to be careful not to over generalise.

- What is the situation?
- How do local people define the issues?
- How is the same or different from the way outsiders see the situation?
- What is the dominant pattern and what are notable variations?
- Where does the situation come from (some history)?

- Who is involved and who is not? Why?
- When does the situation occur (seasonal issues, if relevant)?

Exploring Causes, Consequences, and Constraints The next step is often (depending on the objectives and the overall purpose of the study) to look at the causes and consequences of the situation and to trace the various forward and backward linkages.

- What explains the situation which has been uncovered?
- What is the historical background?
- What other factors affect the situation and how (e.g., the national economy, weather patterns, etc.)?
- How is this tied into other areas of community concern?
- What are the consequences on the local population in terms of people's well-being?
- What are the constraints to improving the situation?

Figuring out how the information can be used. This is an important step to figure out how the information can be used. At this step, the stakeholders should be asking questions like:

- What implications do these findings have for the well-being of people in this community?
- How can this information be used to make things better?
- What have we learned that can make our project's interventions more effective?

(IFAD, 2000)

In conventional research, the process of analysis and reflection often rests with outside researchers/experts, acting on behalf of external donors and institutional stakeholders (Gaventa and Estrella, 1998). In PR, analysis is as much a collective and participatory process, as the determination of purpose and the collection of information. Because of the nature of qualitative data, all stakeholders including data collectors and facilitators, whether they are project staff, implementing partner staff or primary stakeholders, participate in sessions to analyse the data. Open-ended discussions help to explain the data. The collective analysis is disseminated to all those from whom the information was gathered. The process adds ownership to findings and commitment to actions (Estrella and Gaventa, 1998).

5.2 Dissemination of Knowledge

Participatory research emphasises self-reflection and critical analysis. In order to bring the results of this learning to a broader community and to ensure that knowledge is utilised for actions/better intervention designs for change, it is important to carefully disseminate the results of analysis.

Dissemination is the interactive process of communicating knowledge to target audiences so that it may be used to lead change. The primary goal is to share the knowledge/analysis that the research has generated with others. The particular audience to which the information is directed determines the dissemination method. There is a need to communicate findings in a way that is credible and clear for particular audiences. It is also helpful to think about dissemination in three broadly different ways, viz., dissemination for awareness, for understanding, and for action.

5.2.1 Different Ways of Dissemination

Dissemination for Awareness

It is when the purpose is to make people aware of research/project initiated at the community level. This may be useful for those target audiences that do not require a detailed knowledge of work done, but it is helpful for them to be aware of research/project activities and outcomes. Creating such an awareness of research/project's work will help the "word of mouth" type dissemination and help the organisation/ individuals/ individual to build an identity and profile within the community (Harmsworth & Turpin, 2000).

Dissemination for Understanding

There are a number of groups/audiences who need to be targeted directly. This goal is associated with the need to share with others the rationale for certain projects or services. Sharing with others so that they understand what has been undertaken and

what has resulted enables them to take on board the lessons that have been learnt. This can be particularly useful for other groups considering a similar project. Equally important is the goal of informing the programme decision makers of credible and accessible findings (Harmsworth & Turpin, 2000).

Dissemination for Action

“Action” refers to a change of practice resulting from the adoption of products, materials or approaches offered by the proposed project. These groups/audiences will be those people that are in a position to “influence” and “bring about change” within their organisations. They will need the right skills, knowledge and understanding of work done in order to achieve real change (Harmsworth & Turpin, 2000).

The three goals, Awareness, Understanding, and Action, are not mutually exclusive; one or all of the goals mentioned above may be relevant to each potential audience. For example, an audience who can affect mainstreaming decisions will need to be exposed to findings for the purpose of awareness, understanding and some form of action. Another example might be the need to share with programme staff for understanding and for the purpose of action.

Different goals can be reflected in the different audiences for dissemination. This may in turn influence the dissemination method chosen for that goal and audience.

Different Dissemination Goals and Formats for Different Audience				
Dissemination Audience	Role	Possible dissemination goals	Message/purpose of dissemination (which results the audience needs to get and why)	Medium/Format (How the audience can get the results and when)
Community not directly involved	Plays a small part (e.g.	Awareness	Summary of findings and	Community meetings, discussions, informal

in programme	answers questionnaire s)		conclusions to create support for the programme	public education methods, Audio/video, pictures, newsletters.
Community directly involved in programme	Plays a part in planning and carrying out data collection	Awareness, understanding, action	Full report (findings and conclusions) and recommendations to help put them into action	Community meetings, multi-stakeholder dialogues, presentations in workshops, informal public education methods, audio video, pictures, newsletters
Programme staff	Co-ordinates and facilitates community decision-making and action	Understanding , action	Methodological issues, findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations to help put them into action	Meetings, structured presentations in workshops, full reports
District-level departments, agencies, organizations	Receive information, disseminate lessons, support future action	Awareness, understanding, action	Findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for policy decision-making	Presentations in seminar for discussions, multi stakeholder dialogues, full reports, audio video, pictures, newsletters, press releases, e-mail dissemination
Regional-level agencies and departments	Receive information, disseminate	Awareness, understanding, action	Same as district-level findings and conclusions,	Presentations in seminar for discussions, multi-

	lessons, support future action		lessons learned and recommendation for policy decision-making	stakeholder dialogues; Full report plus executive summary, audio video, pictures, newsletters, press releases, e-mail dissemination
National-level ministries, agencies, organizations	Receive information, disseminate lessons, support future action	Awareness, understanding, action	Findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendation for policy decision-making	Presentations in Seminar for discussions, multi stakeholder dialogues; Full report plus Executive summary, audio video, pictures, newsletters, press releases. Internet- e-mail dissemination
External funding agencies	Receive information, disseminate lessons, support future action	Awareness, Understanding, Action	Methodological issues, findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendation to help put them into action and policy-making	Presentations in seminar for discussions, multi stakeholder dialogues; Full report plus executive summary, audio video, pictures, newsletters, press releases. Internet- e-mail dissemination
International agencies	Receive information,	Awareness, understanding,	Findings and conclusions,	Presentations in Seminar/Conferences

	help disseminate lessons, support future action	action	lessons learned and recommendations for policy decision-making	, executive summary, audio video, pictures, newsletters, Internet-e-mail dissemination networking
Other Interested Professionals	Receive information, disseminate lessons, support future action	Understanding	Summary of findings and conclusions to create support for the programme	Presentations in Seminar/Conferences , Executive summary, audio video, pictures, newsletters, press releases. Internet- e-mail dissemination

(Myers & Barnes, 2004; UNICEF, 2014)

5.2.2 Dissemination Formats

Disseminating and sharing information is an essential part of the PR process. All relevant stakeholders must be informed about the community based programmes and any meetings or gatherings that are to be held. Once the stakeholders are identified, information should be disseminated about meetings and relevant project information. During implementation of the participation procedure too, information dissemination is important to ensure feedback to and from stakeholders.

Note Bank: How to Undertake a Stakeholder Analysis

1. Brainstorm and list all possible participants and stakeholders who are likely to be affected by programme activities in the area, either positively, negatively, directly or indirectly. Do this in as participatory manner as possible. Do not forget marginalized and minority groups.
2. Prioritise the list and select those stakeholders who are most important and/ or primary stakeholders – this should be as participative as possible. Use the questions below to assess the interests, problems, potentials and linkages of your selected stakeholders:

- a. How will these stakeholders be affected/impacted by the project(s)?
 - b. What could be the stakeholder's main needs, interests and motives for being involved in a participatory forum/committee?
 - c. What is the stakeholder's potential contribution and capacity towards the effective functioning of the forum/committee?
 - d. What consequences will their participation have on the forum/ committee?
 - e. What is the relationship between the different stakeholders, including the existing or potential conflicts of interest?
3. Draw a Stakeholder Table by summarising the information that has been gathered about the stakeholders. Further investigation may need to be conducted in order to answer some of the above questions. Also include the contact details of each stakeholder.
 4. Over time, particularly at the initial stages of implementation of the participatory project, new stakeholders may become involved while others fall out. This should be done on a controlled and managed basis with the new members also being analysed.

The stakeholder analysis gives a clear idea about who should be involved in the stakeholder participation process. This may change over time with more or different stakeholders being included, but it will provide a good base to start with. The chances of the project's success and sustainability will increase if these stakeholders are involved in all further planning and implementation. Also, since an efficient feedback structure is essential for successful participation, establish a contact list of all involved stakeholders and group them according to how information should be distributed (post, telephone, e-mail, etc).

(Republic of South Africa, 2005)

A. Dissemination Formats for Providing Information

The following methods provide information to the general public. They are one-way communication approaches that involve disseminating messages or transmitting information or persuading people to change their behaviour (Srampickal Jacob, 2006).

- **Bulletin Boards/Community Notice Boards**

Community notice boards and signs in local language provide information to the general public. The signs are posted at the community hall, notice boards, grocery stores, public facilities and major intersections in a clear and easily visible manner so that passers-by can easily read them and receive the key information.

- **Existing Newsletters and Free Publications**

A newsletter is generally an inexpensive way to target a specific segment of the community. Sometimes free publications that highlight related local or community issues also exist. Placing an article in an existing newsletter or free publication is a good way of disseminating information at the beginning of the research/project initiative.

- **Broadcast Announcements/Advertisements**

Advertising successfully disseminates information about events or addresses particular issues in a short time-span using limited space. Announcements on the radio or advertisements in the local newspaper reach a broad audience and create public awareness.

- **Press Releases or Newspaper Inserts**

Articles or newspaper inserts used at any time of the stakeholder participation process to encourage general interest obtains wide publicity and educates the public on the background and current issues of the project. Newspaper inserts stand out from other newspaper advertisements since they come as a loose section of the newspaper.

If a press release or insert is to be published, the contents should be discussed with the stakeholder representatives and include assistance and input in editing and publishing the article. Press releases and inserts are generally not expensive and are convenient for the public to read at their own pace and time. The limitations of this method are that only the literate public can be reached and that the decision to print the article will rest with the publisher or editor of the newspaper.

- **Brief Presentations/Announcements at other Local Meetings**

Announcements at community-related meetings are a good way of disseminating information on a project to a wider group of potential stakeholders. These meetings might also serve as a good opportunity to network and make valuable contacts with other key persons. As only preparation time, transport and time at the meeting are required; this method is generally very cost effective. Announcements also create a deeper understanding of the initiative and usually allow for a question and answer session after the presentation. The disadvantages of this practice are that it only reaches a particular sector of the community and relies on the participants to convey the information to the rest of the community. Be prepared to answer unanticipated concerns, which may not have come up in other stakeholder meetings. Also, be clear and quick as the time of another organisation's meeting is being used.

- **Project Newsletter**

Newsletters are an excellent form of giving updates on current affairs, providing background information and announcing stakeholder gatherings. Sending the newsletter to key stakeholders spreads information more effectively, especially if e-mail facilities are available. Reports can also be summarised or published in their entirety in a newsletter. However, it must be remembered that newsletters can be time consuming, costly and are limited to literate community members (Republic of South Africa, 2005).

B. Participatory Dissemination Formats

Participatory dissemination formats emphasise two way communication processes, encouraging dialogue centric problem analysis and search for a solution. The following are examples of participatory dissemination formats.

- **Public/Community or Stakeholder Meetings**

Public or stakeholders' meetings are gatherings used to present information and exchange views on specific aspects of an initiative. Meetings bring out the views of different stakeholder groups and provide an opportunity to discuss issues in the broader context. During the meeting it should be emphasised that the stakeholders' inputs are very valuable for the initiative, as they actively contribute to project planning and implementation in this way. However, the nature of public meetings may limit interaction due to a large number of attendees or a dominating group/individuals – this needs careful facilitation.

- **Workshops**

Workshops are structured meetings with the aim of defining issues, planning activities, evaluating options, explaining technical material or developing solutions when problems need to be resolved. They are seminars or gatherings of small groups of people (usually between 10 and 30), led by representatives of the implementing agency and/or a facilitator. They are designed to produce a group product and are useful for bringing the stakeholders together and sharing information and ideas, providing orientation and engaging people in collective reflection, articulation and analysis. A combination of formal and informal methods ranging from lecture, role-play, field practice in participatory research, peer learning and group discussions, and simulation are used in the workshops. For example, workshops with workers on occupational health provided information about occupational diseases, industry rules, workers' rights, and medical provisions provided by the industry and government (Mohanty, 2010).

NOTE BANK: Planning and Running a Workshop

- Pay attention to the planning and management of the workshop, as this will predetermine success;
- Decide upon the topic, time, participants, and participatory techniques to be used and subjects to be covered;
- Notify the participants early;
- Plan logistics and costs with other relevant organisers, if they exist;
- Design the workshop structure and timeframe with alternate plenary sessions, subgroups, presentations, ice breakers, etc. – it is usually better to have discussions in a circle, not lecture from the front;
- Plan for methods to include stakeholder groups who are not participating, or others who are dominating, as well as how to deal with any potential conflict between stakeholder groups;
- Decide upon who is responsible for documenting the results of each day and final results of the workshop;
- Establish effective feedback mechanisms.

(Republic of South Africa, 2005)

As workshops can take several days, facilities need to be organised, and depending on the budget, meals and accommodation arranged. The following points will provide assistance in planning and implementing a workshop.

- ***Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD)***

One of the objectives of multi-stakeholder dialogues is information sharing. Multi-stakeholder dialogues create a platform among different stakeholders through discussion, dialogue and debate to understand new information about the existing issues as well as analyse the findings on the spectrum of stakeholders' values. Multi-stakeholder dialogues serve the purpose of bringing various stakeholders from the powerless to the powerful face-to-face. Such interfaces are critical not only for the possibilities of dialogue which they create, but also because they remove the fear which powerless people have for those in seats of authority. For example:

- In mobilising workers to demand their rights for safe workplaces and compensation for diseases that affect them in textile factories, workers were brought face-to-face with people from the industry, government medical boards, and medical practitioners.
- In mobilising people who were affected by industrial pollution caused by chemical industries in Chiplun, Maharashtra, meetings were organised with representatives of industry, members of the pollution board and affected people (Anand 2004). A similar process took place in Visakhapatnam where those displaced by the National Thermal Power Corporation were mobilised to organise a public hearing in which representatives of industry were present to answer the questions raised by the displaced people (Ranga Rao and Sampat Kumar 2004).

- **Campaigns**

Campaigns are used for raising wider public awareness about an issue. Unlike workshops, campaigns take place in the public space. The objectives of organising campaigns are to:

- Exert pressure on the State/funding authorities, and
- Change public opinion and broaden public support for the issue.

- Give invaluable experiential education, especially when there is a conscientious process of planning, action, and reflection.

- **Community media**

Popular culture is a very effective means not only for sharing information with people, but also for connecting them emotionally with a cause. Street plays are an effective means for communicating a message, because they are informative as well as entertaining, especially in communities where literacy levels are low. They are performed at places where a ready audience is available, such as weekly markets, and engage the audience by posing questions to them. The scripts are written in local dialects and they incorporate folk music and traditional dances. The community members can easily identify with the characters in the play and learn about the issues.

5.3 Utilising Research to Affect Change: Case Study Analysis

Participatory research is about social transformation and change. Social transformation requires a number of interventions viz., organising, mobilising struggle and knowledge. Participatory research recognises popular knowledge; and facilitates people's control over the processes of inquiry, education and action. Building on this premise the case studies in this Section highlight the use of PR approach in the process of enquiry (analysis) and education (dissemination of information) in collective action for social change (utilisation of knowledge).

The Chapters "People and Forests:A Participatory Study" by Mohan Hirabhai Hiralal and Savita Tare (Pp 233-252) and "Women's Struggle for Empowerment" by Vijay Kanhere (Pp 163-171) in Rajesh Tandon (Ed) *Participatory Research Revisiting the Roots* (the required reading for this Uni clearly illustrate the significance of PR in raising consciousness amongst people by engaging them in the knowledge generation, sharing and utilisation process. Drawing on these Chapters, the following Section focuses on the outcomes of PR approach in terms of the utilisation of knowledge for social transformation.

Location

The location of the case studies is Dhulia District in Northern Maharashtra and Ghadchiroli District in north-eastern Maharashtra in India. The local population predominantly comprises of poor *adivasis* or tribal people. The activists/researchers from outside the community took the initiative to raise awareness amongst the tribal populations and promote their participation to bring about change within their community.

Scope/Scale

The research aimed at facilitating a deeper understanding of the factors affecting the lives of the tribes and their knowledge systems to improve their lives. The local

problems of food, fuel and fodder and livelihood were entry points of the research. However, the focus was not just to gather information from local community members, but also to create process oriented awareness and capacity building amongst them, so as to enable them to take action for change.

Framework underlying Participatory Research Approach

- Build a critical awareness of the present growth model of development particularly among those worst affected by it;
- Facilitate participation and control in various stages of the learning process, viz. articulation of problems, needs and goals, analysing the problems, and using the analysis to enhance one's position, knowledge and sharing that knowledge with diverse stakeholders;
- Mobilise and organise the tribals to challenge and transform the existing discriminating system;
- Promote and build alternative mechanisms to support the process of change.

Strategies

- Creation of distinct space and time for the oppressed groups to learn, understand and share their concerns and evolve as a cohesive collective;
- Promoting critical thinking and deepening the understanding of the structures of power, including gender;
- Expanding the knowledge base through information gathering, critical analysis and sharing;
- Enabling identification and prioritisation of the issues for action through informed decision making;
- Formulating a vision of an alternative society including alternate models of social and economic relations and alternate development paradigms;
- Involving activists/change agents who are aware and politically conscious to interact with, mobilise, learn from and raise the consciousness of such deprived groups; and
- Facilitating the formation of mass organisations at the local level for advocating

change in the structures.

Methodology

- Village level small group meetings to tap the knowledge and experiences of villagers vis-à-vis their local issues.
- Awareness campaigns through cycle tours. Vrikshamitra, a civil society organisation, was working on a mission of conscientising the people about their problems. They toured 20 villages in the District Ghadchiroli on bicycles so that contact the people directly.
- *Sahyog Shibirs* (camps for discussion), and education camps.

The Process of Change: Utilisation of Knowledge

The process of sharing individual experiences made the tribal people aware that their problems were not isolated individual problems; rather the problem was part of the system and society. The local people themselves analysed their situation to identify their problems. Though the process was initiated by an external push by the outside activists, in the later stages it was the tribal women in particular who had control over the situation. The PR process was “collective” in nature, which provided a collective analysis of the grim social reality faced by tribes. They engaged in a “collective analysis” of their situation and identified problems – sexual harassment by the rich, domestic violence and alcoholism, *nistar rights* (traditional rights over forests, land and water) and *tendu leaf* (tobacco leaf) and took actions to deal with the same.

The tribes were also able to identify the plausible reasons for the atrocities and they planned to tackle these issues together. The participatory process followed in the camps helped women and tribes to organise themselves around a common cause; leading to the creation of a certain degree of cohesiveness amongst them, particularly amongst women members of the tribal community.

The process also ensured a mutual exchange of knowledge – between the tribes and outside activists. The activists could gain an insight into the complex *adivasi* social system, which gave them a better understanding of their issues and equipped them to

work for social change. The tribes in turn were educated in terms of their rights and choices.

They identified their individual problems as those prevalent at large in the society and gained confidence that these were a form of abuse against which they would have to fight for a dignified living. The learning process in this case, for both these groups, was through a specific local problem, which had to be dealt with locally. It was experiential learning, without any predetermined course line.

Once the problems and the possible reasons were identified, the group began to act. For example, women in Dhulia identified that the consumption of liquor was one of the main reasons for wife beating; they began targeting bootleggers to drive them out of the villages. They broke the bootleggers' pots and bottles and warned them not to sell liquor in the villages. They also punished the men, who thrashed their wives, publicly. This is surely a case of participatory social action, wherein women mobilised themselves to protest against a social evil. The impetus for the movement came from participating in the camp, where these women gained confidence and felt that they could fight their case collectively.

Needless to say, the outcome of PR was indeterminate. In the case of the tribal women of Dhulia what began as an attempt to address forms of economic marginalization of the group (paid low wages; lack of participation in the labourers' movement) soon shifted to concerns, which the activists had not conceived of, such as sexual harassment from rich farmers (result of their tribal identity and gender), and tribal men (result of gender). Gathering authentic knowledge about what tribal women already know is the starting point for creating new knowledge. Carried out in the context of concrete problems that the tribes were facing, the new knowledge afforded insights into the status of tribes in the social system and the necessary action that followed as a consequence of that insight and awareness. The alliance between participatory social research and participatory social action is therefore deemed imperative.

The *Sahyog Shibirs* (discussion camps) and educational camps became a space for tribals and tribal women to address issues of oppression. This was made possible through the subtle manoeuvring of power relations between the researchers and the

tribal women. Although the researchers were the initiators of the PR process, which gave them ascendancy to begin with, the research process was anything but one-sided. The process involved the tribals and women who began to value the knowledge that they possessed leading to a semblance of equalisation of power. The control over the entire process of PR was mutually shared. The expert researcher was not the sole arbiter of the methods and analysis of research. The process of collectively analysing given social settings provided the tribals with many alternatives, who took some concrete steps in their struggle against oppression. In waging this struggle, PR brought to the fore the realisation that people are the critical resource wherein it is they who can provide the context for enquiry.

Since PR was initiated in the context of the actual reality that the tribal community intended to change, existing problems provided the initial motivation for engaging in the research process. For example, tribal in both the districts were well aware about the oppression and atrocities committed against them by the rich landlords. This awareness led to the formation of an organisation under the leadership of a local tribal leader committed to the cause of liberating the land and stopping atrocities against women and tribal people. Many city based volunteers and left activists also worked in the area and contributed to making this movement a success.

Initially, the extent and nature of women's participation was limited, but increased in scope and depth as the process moved on. A few women, by enhancing their understanding and knowledge of a particular action and taking action to change it to their benefit made a significant impact. They also started asserting their rights in the organisation. The case study of 'People and Forests' showed that when men expressed a desire to negotiate the women's wages the women insisted that they would do it themselves.

Participatory research focuses on localised problems. Tribals at the camps were not interested in generalisations, but were more focused on local problems that they had encountered and were willing to take cognisance of the explanations that allowed them to predict and control local events. The emphasis was on authenticity and not on

scientific validity of the information. The tribes chose the action strategies that would improve their situation.

The unintended consequence of following the PR technique is that it also develops organisations that connect local participants to a larger world, besides generating authentic knowledge.

The interactive learning process that PR involved and encouraged the tribal women to an extent that they took certain remarkable measures that they had never thought of prior to the commencement of the educational camp.

Participatory research in a way addresses the central problem spelt out by Paulo Freire in “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, “How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?” Firstly, what is essential is implicitly part of PR the solidarity between the researchers and the tribes with respect to liberation in Freire’s sense. Central to the tasks undertaken in PR is to begin the process wherein those who are subjugated get to perceive their own reality and act upon it. The oppressed (tribes) in Freire’s words, “must be their example in the struggle for their redemption”. The collectively articulated knowledge afforded by PR, makes this change not altogether impossible however incremental it may be (Freire, 2003).

Emerging Lessons

The case studies bring out certain interesting principles and patterns, highlighted as below.

- Strategies of capacity building, knowledge building and advocacy for empowering the marginalized operate in an integrated and interlinked manner.
- Through action, knowledge is created. Analysis of that knowledge leads to new forms of action. By involving people in gathering information, knowledge production itself becomes a form of mobilisation for action. Through the cycles of action-reflection-action, the nature of action gets deepened, moving from practical problem solution to more fundamental social transformation.
- Awareness and action appear critical in the participatory research process. Learning

to exercise informed choices within an expanding framework of information, knowledge and analysis of the options available and collective organisation of the disadvantaged marginalized groups leads to action for change. The continuous linkage of awareness, knowledge, skill and action sustains and strengthens empowerment. The case studies clearly demonstrate that their ability to take action was based on their awareness of the issues through the knowledge and learning that they received through interactions in educational camps and awareness campaigns.

- There is ownership of knowledge, reflection and learning by the marginalized groups. People investigate a given reality. Their reflection and evaluation of a given set of issues facilitates its continuous use in the future.
- Impetus for citizen action arises from their immediate conditions. People get together and take action in response to those conditions. This action further requires reflection and learning. This is where structured opportunities of learning can hasten and enable the process of empowerment. The case studies have shown that structured learning opportunities through *shibirs* (camps) provided a forum for learning, sharing of insights and experiences.
- The organisation building process is a collective process. People come together for collective analysis. It is this collective nexus that facilitates functions of new groups and organisations and strengthens the existing organisations.
- The case studies also indicate that the initial initiative came from intervening organisations. However, this control gradually shifts over a period of time in to the hands of local people and groups. External facilitation only enables the inherent capacities of citizens to reach their full potential. The organisations of villagers made for negotiating wages for collecting tendu leaf is an example of citizens taking the initiative themselves.
- Intervening organisations play a catalytic role in empowerment. Some essential pre-requisites to initiate the process of social transformation are:
 1. Organisations should be committed to the goal of empowerment

2. They should be geared to meet the demands of the task of empowering.
 3. They should be sensitive to the citizens' perspective.
 4. They should create conditions for open sharing and collective analysis.
- The creative process of responsible and useful knowledge making requires a dialogical research oriented to the social situation in which people live. This simultaneously leads to conscientisation, social research and praxis (Borda Orlando Fals, 1985). Through a process of conscientisation, groups are able to define, conduct and interpret their own research. They are able to take collective action on the basis of their research.
 - The knowledge and skills necessary for people's collective action is created by participation and control of the marginalised. They need to be involved in the production of knowledge. In order to do so, they have to learn and sharpen the tools of inquiry, i.e., the methods of data collection analysis and dissemination. A range of methods are used to promote their participation in creating knowledge such as, interactions, campaigns, awareness camps, educational *shibirs*, discussion, dialogue, etc.
 - Control over the processes of knowledge generation, knowledge analysis and dissemination of knowledge is empowering. As people engage in the process of knowing and analysis, they become critically aware of their situation. Participatory research stresses inter-personal communication among different stakeholders. The sharing of experiential knowledge and information with diverse stakeholders leads to an understanding of possible ways of changing the oppressive situation and enables collective action towards transformation. The case studies also point out that outsiders, be they activists, educators, facilitators, community animators, or researchers, often provide the initial focus of the problem. They catalyse the participatory process of change and take steps to ensure that the control of the local people and groups over the process of transformation steadily increases.

THINK TANK

- Why are participatory approaches to analysis, dissemination and the utilisation of research so critical to development research?

Summary

In this Unit we explored the participatory methods of analysing, disseminating and utilising knowledge. We understood that when people themselves engage in the reflective processes and engage in knowledge generation, they are able to analyse their situations; disseminate the findings useful to the community in myriad ways and take action accordingly.

Recommended Readings

Tandon Rajesh (Ed) 2005, *Participatory Research, Revisiting the Roots*, New Delhi. Mosaic Books

- Chapter 22 “People and Forests: A Participatory Study” by Mohan Hirabhai Hiralal and Savita Tare
- Chapter 15 “Women's Struggle for Empowerment” by Vijay Kanhere
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