Advocacy Strategies and Approaches

A Resource Manual for Community Advocates and Trainers in Advocacy in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

About ICIMOD

The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development** (ICIMOD) is an independent 'Mountain Learning and Knowledge Centre' serving the eight countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas – Afghanistan , Bangladesh , Bhutan , China , India , Myanmar , Nepal , and Pakistan – and the global mountain community. Founded in 1983, ICIMOD is based in Kathmandu, Nepal, and brings together a partnership of regional member countries, partner institutions, and donors with a commitment for development action to secure a better future for the people and environment of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. The primary objective of the Centre is to promote the development of an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem and to improve the living standards of mountain populations.

Advocacy Strategies and Approaches

A Resource Manual for Community Advocates and Trainers in Advocacy in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

Editorial Team
Nani Ram Subedi (Lead Author)
Rosemary A. Thapa (Consultant Editor)
Dharma R. Maharjan (Technical Support and Graphic Design)

Printed and bound in Nepal by
Quality Printers Pvt. Ltd.
Kathmandu, Nepal

Foreword

ICIMOD recognises that the participation of civil society organisations in development processes is a critical factor for the promotion of sustainable mountain development. There is much evidence to indicate that mountain people have generally been marginalised from mainstream policy-making processes throughout the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. One of the ways of improving this situation is to enhance the capacity of community-based organisations (CBOs) to bring the opinions and needs of mountain people to the attention of policy makers and development organisations. In 2002, ICIMOD established a new Action Initiative on a 'Regional Programme for Capacity Building of Community-based Organisations in Advocacy Strategies in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas', supported by the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO), The Netherlands.

ICIMOD has facilitated the emergence of several new institutions whose intended role is to address strategic issues related to natural resources management in their constituencies by undertaking lawful advocacy, with the aim of safeguarding the basic rights of mountain communities. The lessons to date show that such institutions can facilitate these processes effectively and that CBOs and their networks in mountain areas are a potentially powerful force to advocate for the rights of mountain communities. However, there is inadequate understanding of, and clarity about, advocacy and its tools and techniques amongst CBOs and NGOs in the region. Therefore, the objective of ICIMOD under the new Action Initiative is to build and strengthen the capacity of selected CBOs in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas in the concepts, tools, and techniques of advocacy and advocacy's use in contributing to developing strategies to address social, economic, and gender inequities. To achieve this objective, the programme is being implemented in partnership and collaboration with over 40 selected civil society networks and NGOs from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

ICIMOD has prepared a Training of Trainers manual for the use of potential trainers of CBOs in advocacy strategies in the HKH region. This resource manual has been prepared as a companion volume to the training manual and provides extended materials that can be used both for training trainers and by trainers working with CBOs. This manual is a resource that will help equip CBOs and their networks to undertake lawful advocacy initiatives and bring the opinions and needs of mountain people to the fore. Both the Resource Manual and the Training Manual are also likely to be of interest to more general audiences who are interested in the promotion of people-centred and sustainable development in the mountains.

Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell
Director General
ICIMOD

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Sofia Sprechmann, whose training in advocacy skills in various contexts inspired me to develop this manual. The resource materials from the manual she co-authored, 'Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change'[1] have been adapted here to capacity building in advocacy in the context of the mountains.

In addition, several examples are included from the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, that were collected during field visits and from interaction with various organisations: I would like to thank all who contributed to this effort.

Josantony Joseph, (josanton@vsnl.com) an experienced advocacy trainer who has worked in many countries, supported ICIMOD as a resource person in ToT workshops in Kathmandu. He also reviewed the manual extensively, inserting additional ideas, tools, and techniques for this version. I very much appreciate the significant contribution that he made. Many other people contributed comments and time during the preparation of the manual. I would like to thank them all, in particular Uddhav Bhattarai, Dilli Ram Adhikari, and Santosh Sharma for their ideas, input, and support; and Judith Amtzis for refining ideas, fine-tuning thoughts and improving the language.

The help of the editorial team in the Information, Management, Communications and Outreach Division (IMCO) is also highly appreciated: Dharma Ratna Maharjan (Layout Design), Asha Kaji Thaku (re-drawing figures), Rosemary Thapa (Consultant Editor), and A. Beatrice Murray (Editor) together ensured that this manual was published in its current form. I would also like to thank Anita Pandey for preparing the illustrations for both the ToT Manual and the Resource Manual.

Finally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Anupam Bhatia, former Programme Manager of the Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG) Programme, for his encouragement, support and guidance. Similarly, I wish to acknowledge all former colleagues in CEGG – Suman

---

[1]   Sprechmann, S.; Pelton, E. *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change.* Copyright © 2001. Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE). Used by permission. CARE International, Atlanta, USA

Rai, Phuntshok C. Tshering, Armila C. Shakya, and Ashish Sinha – for their cooperation and encouragement. Last but not least, I thank Govinda Shrestha and Bishnu K.C. for all their support.

Dr. Nani Ram Subedi
Coordinator
Decentralisation and Local Governance
CEGG Programme

Contents

Chapter 7: Synopses of Case Studies   105

About This Manual

This resource manual has been prepared for community advocates and potential trainers of community-based organisations (CBOs) in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.

The manual is a companion publication to the 'Training of Trainers (ToT) Manual in Advocacy Strategies for Community-based Organisations in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas'. The ToT Manual provides learning tips in the form of bullet points so that trainers can copy them and use them directly in their training sessions. This resource manual provides details of the bullet points in the ToT Manual to allow trainers to read about the conceptual directives in detail. There is some necessary overlap between the two manuals that ensures that they can also be used independently.

Advocacy facilitators should take whatever resources they need from this manual, extracting the required concepts and cases and repackaging them for different types of training programmes. It is not intended that all the materials included in this manual be transformed into a single training programme.

Finally, it is important to remember that those who use advocacy tools to promote a particular issue or action also have an important responsibility – to ensure that the issue being promoted is genuine, that the information is based on a proper factual foundation and adequate scientific research, that promotion will help the people that the advocates profess to support, and that any potential harm to any group of people or the environment has been clearly identified in an objective manner.

1

Advocacy: An Introduction

This chapter presents the 'meaning of advocacy' as collected from the relevant literature and realities of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan countries. The focus of this manual is on the practical understanding of advocacy at the grass roots. This chapter relates the meaning of advocacy to its rationale, i.e., why advocacy initiatives have to be taken up at different levels.

The Concept of Advocacy

This section reviews different definitions of advocacy and relates all definitions to the realities of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region. Past experience indicates that theoretical definitions do not make sense until they are connected to the practical realities of different communities. Based on this assumption, available theoretical definitions are reviewed and connections made with the real-life situation of the HKH region.

Advocacy is the process of raising voices in an effective manner in order to influence others. It is a process rather than a product. When it is done to support or empower the marginalised it is a means of gaining a better policy environment with implications for implementation of policies, rather than an end in itself. The product of advocacy could be better policies or practices in communities. 'Policy' does not mean only those policies which emanate from the government, but also refers to those unwritten practices which have been taking place in communities for some length of time. The empowerment of affected people is the ultimate destination of the kind of advocacy work that NGOs, CBOs, and POs (people's organisations) engage in, in the hope that it would help the affected people to claim their rights in a sustainable manner.

There are various definitions of advocacy. Some selected definitions are presented below.

"Giving of public support to an idea, a course of action, or a belief"
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

The literal meaning of advocacy reflects a way of working that involves the public, engaging them to support a particular approach. This definition accepts the idea of a planned action rather than ad hoc efforts.

Considering the diversity of advocacy experiences and perspectives in different contexts, the Advocacy Institute (AI), Washington, USA, recognises that there is no single 'right' definition or approach to advocacy. The methodology that promoters use in their own context must be respected and shared among advocacy practitioners. Keeping this in mind and yet appreciating the need for a working definition, AI has proposed the following working definition:

> **"Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes – including policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions – that directly affect people's lives"**
>
> The Advocacy Institute

The National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune, India, felt the urgent need to stress that advocacy is not only for, but also through and with the people who are affected, and so stresses the people-centred nature of advocacy:

> **"Public Advocacy is a planned and organised set of actions to effectively influence public policies and to have them implemented in a way that would empower the marginalised. In a liberal democratic culture, it uses the instruments of democracy and adopts non-violent and constitutional means."**
>
> National Centre for Advocacy Studies

This definition indicates that NCAS has identified a clear linkage between advocacy and a political system's democratic process. In its literature, NCAS argues that an advocacy initiative must be in the centre of bridging, resisting, engaging, and strategising. Finally, the initiative must be able to create a force that will promote poor-friendly policies using the spaces within the system.

CARE, a US-based organisation that works in close collaboration with the US government and other national governments, has offered a definition that coincides with the kind of work it is involved in:

> **"Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy decisions"**
>
> CARE

It further defined the key terminologies used in the definition, as follows.

a) **Advocacy is a deliberate process:** It must be clear who you are trying to influence and what policies you wish to change.

b) **Advocacy influences those who make policy decisions:** It is not the same as "being confrontational" or "shouting" at the government.

c) **Advocacy influences those who make policy decisions:** Advocacy is not restricted to policy makers who work for the government. Actors from the private sector or from civil society organisations also make policy decisions at their own levels.

What do these definitions mean from a mountain perspective?

- Planned, organised and logical actions based on the contextual reality.
- A process seeking to highlight critical issues that negatively affects sections of the populace and have been ignored by some individuals or institutions.
- A set of actions with a determined vision of 'what should be' based on human rights and a constitutional framework.
- A process of amplifying the voice of the poor and marginalised to attain a fair and just society.
- A process of forwarding logical arguments aiming to influence the attitude of public position holders to enact and implement laws and public policies so that today's vision can be translated into a future reality.
- A political process, although it remains above party politics and political polarisation.
- Action focusing primarily on public and social policies to have these policies implemented in good faith.
- A process that aims to promote social justice and human rights within communities.
- A collective effort to make governance accountable and transparent.

Finally, advocacy is a strategy to address the policy causes of poverty and discrimination. Advocacy therefore should aim to influence the decisions of policy makers through clear and compelling messages. There are four focus areas targeted by advocacy strategies: (a) creating policies, (b) reforming policies, (c) ensuring that policies are implemented properly, and (d) people's empowerment. The assumption is that addressing the policy causes of poverty and discrimination by influencing the decisions of policy makers increases livelihood opportunities and increases the ability of people to claim their own legitimate rights. As a result, advocacy strategies can make sustainable impacts on large populations.

When the concept of good governance came in as an influential idea in the development arena, advocacy became a means of promoting good governance at all levels. However, the concept of good governance is very vague, and is very often 'slanted' depending on the user of the term (e.g., the WTO, compared to a grassroots NGO etc). Therefore finding a definite application of good governance is difficult. Advocacy, too, has also become a concept with a wide range of connotations. Professionals facilitating the promotion of good governance through advocacy initiatives have begun to interpret advocacy differently. Some tend to include everything related to good governance as an aspect of advocacy. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to differentiate between what **is** and what is **not** not advocacy, as follows below.

Extension work: Extension works target different aspects of the lives of marginalised communities. The main objective of extension in general is to provide people with certain information/skills etc. related to different aspects of their livelihood. Extension work is therefore planned mainly to influence individual or specific community decisions/ways of functioning, but not the decisions of policy makers that affect many people at once.

Information, education and communication (IEC): IEC is carried out to change people's mind-sets and consequently people's practices at the individual level. For example, IEC could be used to promote toilets, the use of condoms, and so on if it is within the health sector. However, advocacy works to create more far-reaching effects than these kind of IEC campaigns could hope to achieve. For example, an advocacy initiative could campaign to allocate more money to the health sector.

Information exchange with the government: The simple exchange of information among different institutions without a definite objective is not advocacy. If analysed information is given to a certain government agency with the objective of influencing specific policy decisions, this could be part of an advocacy initiative. However, cordial relation-building with decision makers by any means is a foundation for advocacy.

Raising public awareness about certain programmes: Information dissemination to raise public awareness about certain institutions and their programmes is often carried out using different types of media. At present, websites are commonly used for this purpose. This kind of information flow does not necessarily help promote an opinion on a certain issue. Advocacy initiatives also use such media to influence policy makers, with this difference that here the information flow focuses on a certain issue and helps promote a definite public opinion.

Fundraising: The primary purpose of advocacy is not fundraising for a specific agency. Sometimes, advocacy is necessary to influence decisions that are related to fund allocations. Advocacy of this type may lead to certain agencies receiving more funds than before. However, this added funding of a particular organisation/group is merely an unintended consequence, not the primary purpose of the advocacy effort.

Watchdog role of different institutions: The role of watchdog is taken up by some groups to safeguard the interests of certain members/groups of the public in order to prevent negative impacts. However, advocacy is generally carried out after something adverse has occurred. Therefore the watchdog role is primarily a preventive measure while an advocacy initiative is generally a curative action. However, after a policy has been created the advocacy group may function to keep track of its implementation. This would of course be necessary but may not necessarily be called advocacy.

Purpose and Objectives of Advocacy

This section highlights some of the reasons for introducing the concept of advocacy to the development of the HKH region. The deprivation of mountain people in terms of access to decisions and policy considerations is considered the prime reason and is therefore the major focus for advocacy in mountain development.

Poverty alleviation is presently the prime agenda of most development agencies, particularly in the HKH region. Despite this being on the top of their agenda and despite receiving massive monetary investments, poverty continues to increase in the rural areas of these regions/countries. Needs-based approaches to development have certainly brought positive changes to some extent, but lasting change has become a challenge for all. Development practitioners are now realising that innovative solutions are necessary to meet this challenge. Influencing policy decisions in favour of the poor could be an aspect of the multifarious efforts required to achieve lasting change.

Purpose of advocacy initiatives: Advocacy initiatives generally aim to promote the public good and attempt to bring about social justice in deprived

communities. Advocacy seeks to use all available media, fora, and methods to bring issues of public concern into the conscious agenda of those who make decisions in this regard. The prime goal of advocacy is to reorient public policy towards enhancing the capacity of those who have a weaker voice in the existing political system. Therefore, the necessity of advocacy initiatives can be summarised by the following facts.

- The causes of poverty and discrimination stem both from decisions made at the household (micro) level and at other macro levels.
- It is not only the government but also various actors in the public and private arenas who contribute to livelihood insecurity and the violation of human rights.
- Only a wide range of programme strategies targeted at multiple causes, including policy causes, will lead to the desired impact.
- It should be assumed that policies are human-made and can be changed. Policies should not be taken as immutable, given by some super human power. Advocacy is an effective tool to bring about policy change.

Objectives of advocacy initiatives: From a holistic viewpoint, various relatively powerful actors in private and public life contribute to livelihood insecurity and violations of human rights. A significant impact can be achieved by changing the practices of these powerful stakeholders. The ultimate goal of an advocacy initiative is to improve the livelihood and human rights of significant numbers of people. Advocacy targets policy makers and implementers at levels above the household. In particular, advocacy initiatives are carried out to meet the following objectives:

- facilitating social justice – gaining access and a voice for deprived groups in the decision making of relevant institutions;
- changing the power relations between these institutions and the people affected by their decisions – thereby changing the institutions themselves; and
- bringing a compelling and lasting improvement in people's lives.

Prerequisites for Advocacy

By definition, advocacy is a process of raising the voice of voiceless people. The voiceless can raise their voice when there is an open or transparent system of governance that is run on democratic principles. This section highlights the conditions of communities that demonstrate why advocacy initiatives are needed at all levels.

Advocacy is perceived as an effective means of achieving good governance at all levels. The concept of power decentralisation has identified certain ideal conditions that can be applied as indicators for assessing the status of good governance in a society. These conditions explain the parameters that public and private institutions should keep in mind. Ordinary people as citizens of a country deserve the right to review whether or not institutions and individuals are following these parameters. To respect this right is a major emphasis of a rights-based approach to development. If people determine that public and private institutions are not functioning in line with the ideal parameters that they are supposed to follow, they can raise their voice in a manner that is allowed within their own constitutions. In other words, they can begin an advocacy initiative.

From this perspective, good governance, the rights-based approach, and advocacy initiatives are related to each other. Only a democratic system of government can really open the space for promoting good governance and a rights-based approach to development. Therefore, a democratic system moving towards attaining good governance at all levels of public life is the prime requisite for advocacy initiatives. In this context, the organisations that are willing to take part in advocacy initiatives must pay attention to some ground rules.

Advocacy is not a separate programme and/or an additional activity. You have to be able to embed advocacy into on-going programmes. If you think that your vision and mission are linked to the policy considerations of your state or country, then attempting to influence changes in these policies needs to become part of your organisational vision. To take up advocacy as a working approach, certain elements would help, as indicated below.

Gathering information about the policy that you want to change: Before beginning any advocacy initiative, it is very important to understand the existing policies, practices, and mechanisms for policy enforcement and the key institutions responsible for policy change. Who are the persons responsible for making decisions? You have to carry out research applying various methods. Such research could use formal or informal methods, depending upon what issue you are taking up.

Assessing risks: Remember no advocacy initiative is risk free. However, you should be able to assess the degree of risk. The most important aspect is the political environment in which you are working. If you analyse the risk properly, there will be less likelihood that you will make a mistake which will cause hardship to you, your partners, and the communities that you are working with.

Building strategic relations: Remember that there are many organisations like yours in society. Policy change is normally not possible through the efforts of a single institution. A collective voice is stronger than a solitary one. Therefore, you must be able to build strategic relationships with other organisations.

Establishing your credibility as an advocate: This aspect is very much related to internal good governance. The organisation willing to take up advocacy must itself be following all the norms and conditions of good governance at the organisational level, and the people around the organisation must believe in you. Otherwise your credibility to represent the population that you would be advocating on behalf of will be severely compromised.

Credibility Checklist
- Can you legitimately speak on behalf of the people affected by the issue?
- Are you politically neutral – have you gained the image of neutrality in the eyes of the community as far as political parties are concerned?
- Do you have enough information and expertise relevant to the issue?
- Do you have people who can effectively lead the movement that you are going to create on behalf of the community?
- Are you properly known and respected by the policy makers involved in the issue?

Linking advocacy with organisational vision and mission: It has already been mentioned that advocacy cannot be carried out in isolation as a separate programme or activity. It has to be merged into the working strategy of the organisation.

Maintaining focus: Advocacy is not an easy job that can be performed in a short time span. It may take much time to get policy change on some issues. Therefore, you have to be able to maintain your focus on the specific issues over a lengthy period of time.

All the above parameters suggest elements of the foundation necessary to start an advocacy initiative on selected issues. These parameters will also give an indication of whether your ideas fit in with community priorities.

Relation to the Rights-based Approach

The rights-based approach (RBA) to development has opened up a new avenue of perception of the causes of poverty and deprivation. It is a human rights dimension that has sensitised those working within the development paradigm. Sensitisation is very close to the heart of any advocacy effort. This section highlights some of the commonalities of these two relatively new imperatives in the development discourse.

Rights-based approaches to development encourage us to pay more attention to the root causes of poverty rather than to the symptoms. Many people in the world are poor and various development agencies exist with different mandates and agendas for poverty alleviation. All of these agencies are offering their services in one way or another to minimise the suffering that poverty creates. However, the root causes of the suffering are often not minimised. Development efforts are therefore somehow focused on the resulting symptoms of poverty. The rights-based approach is a step that contributes to the elimination of the root causes of poverty. The basic thrusts of the rights-based approach are as follows below.

- Understanding that human beings have inherent rights assured by international standards of human rights and country-level laws.
- Developing a programme focus on those individuals or groups that are disadvantaged due to discrimination and exploitation.
- Shifting the focus to issues that would previously have been considered as beyond them, and closely linked to power and politics.
- Empowering rights-holders to realise their rights and encourage duty-bearers to be part of the solution.
- Encouraging development agencies to be accountable to the people they work with.

- Refocusing development interventions at a variety of levels, not only at the household level.

When policy makers do not fulfil their responsibilities to others, advocacy initiatives can be instrumental in holding them accountable. Therefore, the RBA suggests to development professionals that the starting point of development interventions must be the recognition of people's inherent rights. This approach does not want to break down long-running welfare distribution programmes, but proposes that everyone must think about people's rights. Finally, development efforts should be able to empower people so they can claim welfare programmes in future, as this is within their inherent rights as citizens.

At the present stage of development, many professionals embrace everything as advocacy, but this confuses the issue by making the term ambiguous. The main issue is that a strongly felt need exists to evolve a culture of human rights within civil society rather than to rely exclusively on political rhetoric and judicial proclamations. A meaningful dissemination of human rights ideas at all levels of education and ongoing training programmes for public officials is related to advocacy. We also need to acknowledge the limitations and constraints of government in implementing human rights in practical situations. Moreover, it is not realistic to believe that the state never violates human rights or that all actions taken by the state are justifiable.

The crucial task therefore is to orient all stakeholders towards people's basic human rights, especially for the disadvantaged and disempowered sections of society. Politicians, who are primary stakeholders, must be made aware that no real development, no real sovereignty, and no real freedom will occur without a strong foundation of basic human rights. This requires re-prioritising the government's agenda and the political will to involve all sections of civil society in rigorous action to this end.

When members of a community see their needs perceived as rights, they can claim these rights themselves. The problems of the community become secondary while paying attention to rights. The needs-based approach and the rights-based approach perceive development differently, as shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Thrust of the rights-based approach: The rights-based approach to development is a conceptual framework for the process of human development based on an international standard. The main elements of this approach are linkages to rights, accountability, empowerment, participation, and non-discrimination (see <www.unhchr.ch> for details).

Needs		Activities to meet needs
• No nursery • Not enough technical know-how • No fence and watchmen	← **Forest** →	• Support for nursery establishment • Arranging training on technical skills • Support for fence and keeping watchmen

Needs		Activities to meet needs
• Not enough water • No irrigation canals • Canals are broken • Users are not united • No drinking water	← **Water** →	• Support for source protection • Support for irrigation canal construction • Promote community organisations

Needs		Activities to meet needs
• Not enough capital • No skills for account keeping • Unproductive use of limited capital	← **Poverty** →	• Fund for communities • Conduct skills training • Provide capital • Start income generation activities

Figure 1.1: An example of the needs-based approach

A rights-based approach believes that:

- People are made poor and marginalised by certain societal factors. These could be on the surface or could be invisibly rooted below the ground.
- The basic needs of communities have to be established as their basic human rights. This is the primary job of community-based organisations.
- Ordinary people suffering from different problems are the prime source of power for changing their destiny. Collective action is the most important instrument to help them claim their own inherent power.
- Communities themselves can find better ways of organising their lives. Outside support should be used to encourage their own suppressed capacity.
- If something is good for their livelihood, the community will do it regardless of outside support. For example, if there are oranges in the garden, people will not wait to learn how to eat. They will start eating anyway (Figure 1.2).

Rights of communities		Activities to attain rights
• Access to forest resources • Protect forests around them • Utilise forest products	← **Forest** →	• Support for community organisation • Raise awareness on forest laws • Support for preparing protection plan
Rights of communities		Activities to attain rights
• Have enough water • Have irrigation canals • Have canals running • Be united • Have safe water	← **Water** →	• Unite people for source protection • Raise awareness on irrigation • Promote participation in planning
Rights of communities		Activities to attain rights
• Generate capital • Be transparent • Explore alternatives to use capital • Start income generating activities	← **Poverty** →	• Provide know-how to raise capital • Clarify advantages of being transparent • Help to explore options for additional incomes

Figure 1.2: An example of the rights-based approach

• Development must be geared towards the marginalised claiming their rights, but this does not mean that there is no need to work towards immediate help in fulfilling basic needs.

• "Human beings are at the centre of concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." (Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration)

• The Human Rights Council of Australia has given extensive thought to the relationship between human rights and development, and particularly to the work of inter-governmental aid agencies. The main concept is that "...human rights and development are not distinct or separate spheres and, therefore, the question is not how to identify points of actual or potential intersection but to accept that development should seen as a subset of human rights. The realisation of the importance of economic and social rights in the development process and the tendency of governments to

ignore steps to their full realisation have led us to look closely at the precise actions needed to realise these rights. An essential aspect of the Right to Development is its emphasis on the centrality of the human person as a subject of the development process."

This approach does not believe that

- outside support can change the life of people in a sustainable way;
- the solution of every problem is outside support; or that
- exploiters at any level will easily loosen their grip on power.

Figure 1.3 shows the gradual changes in development paradigms over the past half a century. Some use the term 'evolution of development approaches'. The reality is that if development approaches are viewed in a broad way from the Marshal Plan approach onwards, various changes can be noticed. The main message is that we need to look back at the activities that have been carried out in the past in the name of development.

The diagram presented here is one example of how to explain the paradigm shifts in development approaches. Other such diagrams can be made. However the **rights-based approach** must always be included in any model or diagram used. Moreover, it will be very helpful to explain Figure 1.3 (or a similar model) by analysing a real-life situation or particular context familiar to the participants. The list of characteristics under each approach can be made more extensive. It can also be clarified that there is no claim that the rights-based approach is the only valid approach for all situations, and that the other two approaches are worthless. Welfare and reform programmes are still active and required.

The objective of preparing the summary worksheet (see p.15) is to give this chapter in a nutshell. In addition, this matrix can be used for assessing the understanding of participants in different learning programmes. The matrix gives a summary of the content and associated questions included in this chapter.

1950   'Development Approaches'   Today

Relief Approach

- Provides welfare to poor people
- Provides services and goods directly
- Based on the belief that outside agents must help those who are unable to help themselves

Reform Approach

- Provides knowledge, skills and awareness
- Gets participation from the community to run development activities
- Is based on the belief that people must change the way they run their own lives, with help from outside experts who know better

Rights Approach

- Perceives that poverty, deprivation and backwardness are outcomes of social structures at local national and international levels
- Believes that the basic needs of poor are basic rights that these structures implicitly or explicitly deny
- Focuses on policy, legal and social reformation to assist the marginalised to CLAIM these as their own basic rights
- Makes strategies with deprived groups to empower them to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives at all levels

Figure 1.3: RBA and the development paradigm

Summary worksheet for introduction

Steps	Questions to explore	Your note
1. Concept of advocacy	• What is advocacy in general? What are the definitions framed by different institutions? What are the core concepts of advocacy in the context of the mountains? • What are the myths of advocacy? Where do the demarcations lie between advocacy and other normal activities?	
2. Purpose and objectives of advocacy	• What is the basic purpose of advocacy? What is the basic purpose of advocacy in the mountains? • What are the objectives of advocacy? • What are the connections beween objectives in our own organisational context?	
3. Prerequisites for advocacy	• What are internal preparations needed before starting advocacy? What is the credibility an institution should have? Where is our own organisation in regard to the credibility checklist? • What could be the elaborated form of the checklist in its contextual basis? • What are the processes of assessing external environments?	
4. Relation to the rights-based approach	• What is rights-based approach? What are the differences between the needs-based and the rights-based approach? • What are the core thrusts of the rights- based approach? • Where are the connections of the rights-based approach in advocacy capacity building? • What are the features of the contemporary shifting of development approaches? What are the connections between the rights-based approach and advocacy in the changing paradigm? • What are the areas of advocacy in the changing paradigm of development approaches?	

Advocacy Strategies and Approaches: A Resource Manual

2

Policy Analysis

This chapter describes the first of the essential steps of the advocacy planning framework. The basic steps of the framework are the following:

- Policy analysis
- Outlining of advocacy strategies
- Finalising advocacy strategies
- Framing an advocacy action plan

These are the basic steps to be considered when taking any action in the name of professional advocacy. This chapter describes policy analysis, the first step of the mission.

Policy: In formal language, policy refers to public decisions taken by government authorities. However, this manual focuses on mountain communities where conventional practices and power relations prevail. Many informal policies and norms affect people's livelihoods. Therefore, both formal and informal policies have to be considered for advocacy strategies.

Policies also include the behavioural aspects of society, which operate as unwritten rules within families and communities. A society's traditional norms are not always in written form, but such norms still function as compelling factors within social life, and have policy implications.

Policy analysis: Knowing the existing status of formal and informal policies is the beginning of policy analysis. Power relations among various stakeholders determine the status of policy enforcement. The gravity of the analysis process is determined by the nature of the issue selected for advocacy.

The nature of a problem can look completely different if it is only analysed superficially. Addressing problems in a community requires in-depth knowledge of the underlying causes. Solid knowledge about deep-rooted causes is the

foundation for identifying solutions that have the potential to achieve high impacts in a sustainable manner. Good solutions are buried beneath the causes, and must be dug out and properly identified.

Policy analysis is the starting point when trying to discover the underlying causes of poverty and discrimination. If a problem is seen as an issue for advocacy, policy analysis helps deepen understanding of the underlying causes. This process also helps maintain the focus of the advocacy initiative.
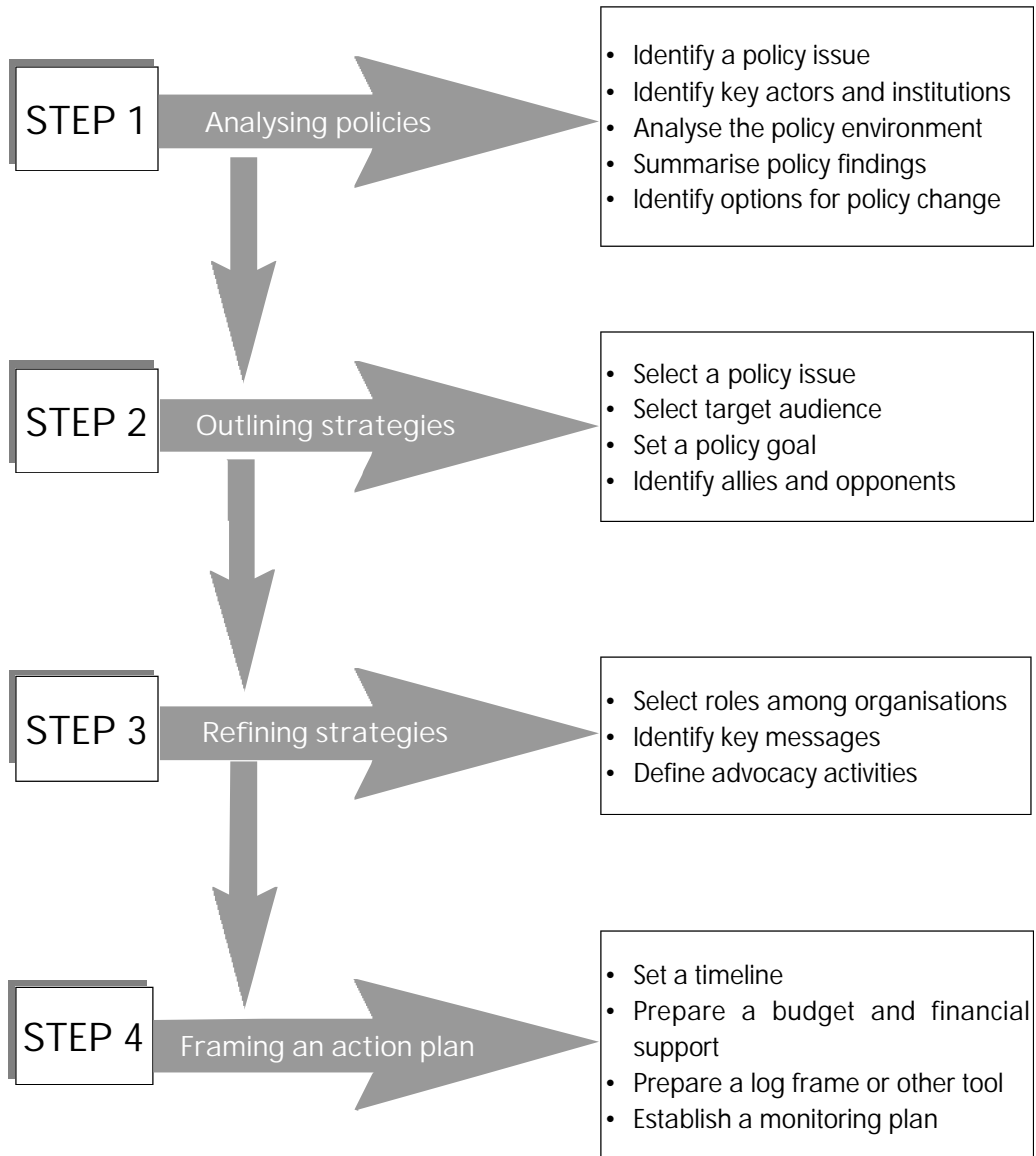
All information needed for an advocacy initiative must be collected, well understood and kept in a secure place. This includes the plan, regulations, and norms set by the government and other institutions in regard to the issue that is being taken up for advocacy.

Policy analysis also examines the dynamics within society in relation to the issue. Without undermining conventional modes of problem analysis and the formation of a problem tree, policy analysis gives priority to deepening the processes of analysis that is to provide inputs for the advocacy projection (Figure 2.1).
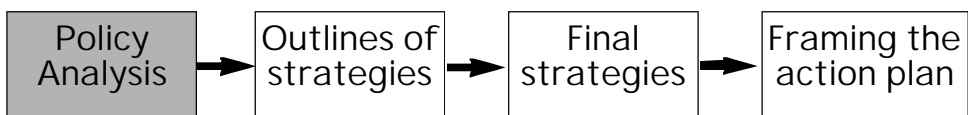
As the first step in the advocacy planning framework, this section presents various tools for policy analysis. Some of the tools come in a logical sequence, while others apply on a random basis. This chapter also makes certain suggestions as processes for policy analysis. It includes knowing the policy issues, identifying key actors, identifying the institutions and individuals that influence the policy environment, and how to craft policy options (Figure 2.2).

'Policy' refers to a plan, a course of action, and sets of regulations adapted by government and other institutions to influence and determine decision making in public affairs. Three basic deficiencies of policies can be identified: (a) lack of policies, (b) inadequate policies, and (c) policies that exist but are not operational. In the mountain perspective of the HKH, the third condition is very common.

Policy analysis is not only important for advocacy but is also needed to reflect the context of the challenge that your organisation is dealing with. The analysis gives you a better idea of how to frame the outcomes and impacts of your action. Therefore, policy analysis is an integral part of your development mission even if you are not carrying out advocacy. Some of the conditions for policy analysis are as follows.

STEP 1 | Analysing policies
- Identify a policy issue
- Identify key actors and institutions
- Analyse the policy environment
- Summarise policy findings
- Identify options for policy change

STEP 2 | Outlining strategies
- Select a policy issue
- Select target audience
- Set a policy goal
- Identify allies and opponents

STEP 3 | Refining strategies
- Select roles among organisations
- Identify key messages
- Define advocacy activities

STEP 4 | Framing an action plan
- Set a timeline
- Prepare a budget and financial support
- Prepare a log frame or other tool
- Establish a monitoring plan

Figure 2.1: Advocacy initiative planning framework – a vertical view point

Policy Analysis → Outlines of strategies → Final strategies → Framing the action plan

Figure 2.2: Advocacy planning framework – a horizontal viewpoint

Capitalise on immediate opportunities: While advocacy initiatives should always be well planned, you sometimes have to capitalise on opportunities that arise immediately. A policy maker, for example, may suddenly come to visit you, giving you an opportunity to influence them in an unplanned way. In this situation, an advocate should not remain quiet, but should make an effort to influence the policy maker, utilising whatever policy-related information the advocate possesses.

Use available information: In some cases, you or your partners may have the policy information that you need. Minor research or no research at all may be sufficient to plan your advocacy initiative properly. If you know the policy causes, the key actors, and the policy environment around your issue, you can proceed on this information alone. You can plan to carry out ongoing research to update and verify available information.

Use your best judgement: The fundamental requirement is that the more you analyse issues, the actors, and the policy environment in advance, the more likely your advocacy initiative is to succeed. However, you may not always have the required funds and energy for policy analysis. Therefore, you must use your own best judgement about what to do, and what not to do.

> Key elements for policy analysis
> - Identification of policy issues – policy causes of poverty and discrimination
> - Identification of key actors and institutions who make policy decisions
> - Identification of individuals and institutions influencing policy decisions
> - Analytical view of political power distribution among the actors
> - Identification of formal and informal processes of policy formulation
> - Understanding of the social and political context of the communities

Identification of Policy Issue

Policy causes of poverty and discrimination are referred to as 'policy issues' in advocacy. Policy issues include one of the following situations: absence of policy, inadequate policy, or improper enforcement of existing policies. It is good to present reports of your policy analysis in a form other than long essay-type reports. One example of a matrix form is given in Table 2.1. An organisation working to promote women's education might analyse the information as given here. This is a very simple example. Other examples related to practical field interventions can be drawn in a similar way.

Table 2.1: An example for tabulation of policy issues

Areas for analysis	Present condition	Policy issues	Focus of advocacy
Do existing policies promote women's education?	No	Absence of adequate policy for women's education	Establish new policy
Do existing policies hinder the promotion of women's education?	Yes	Policy functions to discourage women's education	Change existing policies
Are existing policies related to the issue properly implemented?	No	No proper enforcement of policy	Enforce existing policies

All problems identified in communities have direct or indirect links to policy issues. Policy issues are related to larger political dynamics. As an advocate, you should be familiar with this idea, which is much more complicated than it first appears.

Sometimes, such policy connections can be seen or identified easily from field experiences, observation, and interactions. Sometimes, systematic research about existing laws and law formulation processes are required. For some issues, certain groups may have vested interests leading them to influence policy formulation processes. These possibilities depend upon the gravity of the issue and the context in which it is emerging. Through the policy analysis process, you must be able to identify the following.

- **Exact nature of the problem:** What is the problem all about? Is the problem the same as it appears on the surface or are there other hidden factors?
- **Policy causes of the problem:** How is the problem connected with a policy cause? Where is it connected? To what extent is it connected?
- **People affected by the problem:** Which groups or communities are actually affected? How many are affected and in what geographical region? For how long have these people been suffering from this type of problem? Has the situation changed over time or not?

These questions help identity various aspects of a community's problems. Remember that there are some individuals who benefit and would like to keep the situation as is it now.

The analysis demands a review of the historical background of the problem and its relation to policy formulation processes. The review should also identify the supporting mechanisms, opposing groups, ideological connections, and attempts at change at various time intervals. Such an historical perspective can provide several strategic options for advocacy as well as a vision of future achievements. To make this clear, Table 2.2 gives an example of the tax imposition issue in community forestry in Nepal.

This example was generated based on information gathered from informal sources. These findings may not be uniformly acceptable to all parties involved in this issue. Facilitators can make available several such blank formats on various issues for group exercises throughout the learning process.

Table 2.2: Issue from Nepal: The tax on community forest user group earnings

SN	Areas of analysis	Findings
1.	What is the problem?	Imposition of 40% tax on community forest user groups earning in Nepal.
2.	Who are the affected communities?	All user group members (around 2 million people) throughout Nepal are affected by this decision.
3.	What are the supportive policies?	The following are the supportive policy environments: • National policy of decentralisation and local governance reflected in various laws and regulations. • Nepal's community forestry law and regulations enacted between 1990-2000. • Local self-governance act and regulations enacted in 1999/2000. • Approach paper to tenth five year plan of Nepal prepared and published in 2002.
4.	What are the restrictive policies and practices?	There is some confusion and contradiction among various laws and regulations in Nepal. While no law specifically restricts the community forest policy of Nepal, there are certain restrictive factors, as follows: • Forest master plan and follow-up plans in relation to maintaining national reserve forest under bureaucratic control. • Some laws related to the promotion of national parks and reserve areas. • Contradictory clauses in the local self-governance act and regulations. • Conventional attitudes of bureaucrats working with the forestry sector. This mindset is heavily influenced by institutional corruption in this sector. • Conventional attitude of politicians who use forest resources as a vote bank during elections. • Influence of timber mafias for illegal sale of timber.
5.	What is the situation of policy enforcement?	Many policies in relation to community forestry in Nepal are good, but attitudinal problems exist at the operational level. The following points show the present state of law enforcement: • Bureaucrats working with the forestry sector fail to understand that they are 'the servant' of the people. They still believe they are the 'master', 'provider', 'controller' of forest resources. • Most capacity building programmes supported by foreign agencies are being converted into personal benefit instead of institutional strengthening. • There is a two-sided forest system – community forest and national forest. This has slowed down the promotion of user groups.

Identification of key actors and institutions

Several types of policies are applicable in all communities. Many people living in mountain villages do not know how policies are formulated and who plays the important roles in formulating those policies. Most policies are formulated with the problems of the plains in mind, and are made operational in the mountain areas as well. However, all policies are formulated with individual efforts being made at different levels. Some individuals are made directly responsible by the state system and others become indirectly responsible, willingly or unwillingly. An analysis of key actors in relation to the issue of imposing a 40% tax on community forest user group earnings in Nepal is presented in Table 2.3

Advocating for policy change is not possible without identifying the key actors as individuals or as position holders within certain institutions. Sometimes, an individual contributes to policy change as a single person. Sometimes a group

Table 2.3: Key actors: the tax on CFUG earnings

Key actors in decision making	Level of influence in policy decision making	Areas of interest	Resources they have at present	Resources they do not have at present
Minister of Forest Department	High	Public support as a successful leader	Financial and bureaucratic expertise	• Analytical data • Fresh opinion of users
Bureaucrats of ministry and districts	High	• Promoting 'boss-ism' • Managing to procure excessive earning	• Internal finance • External projects	• Good public image • Impartial public opinion • People-centred attitude
Parliamenta-rians	Medium	• Being popular leaders • Increasing vote banks	• Political workers • Party lines	• Reality of grassroots • Mutual trust
Actors influencing decisions	**Level of influence in policy decision making**	**Areas of interest**	**Resources they have at present**	**Resources they do not have at present**
Timber corporation	High	• Earning excessive profits • Maintaining good linkages with leaders	• Accumulated profits • Good linkages with bureaucracy	• Public faith • Expertise • Business security
Those with business interests in timber	High	• Overnight income • Individual security	• Group strength • Business networking	• Know-how on biodiversity • Ways of starting fair business
Local elites	Medium	• Popular local leaders • Earning extra income	• Some people in villages • Linkages with govt. ministry	• National interest • Technical expertise • Development interests

of individuals makes a collective contribution. Advocates should be familiar with these various dynamic processes.

Key actors for policy consideration can be grouped into two categories: (a) direct policy makers; and (b) those who do not directly make decisions but who can influence decision makers. Both these types of individuals play a vital role in policy formation, change, and enforcement. Therefore, both are very important from an advocacy perspective. Sometimes, the second category may be even more important for advocacy initiatives.

Advocacy is a form of professional struggle to bring about desired change. As in a war strategy, it is also relevant to know about your opponents who are working as key actors in relation to the issue that you are dealing with. If you do not know much about your opponents, you cannot design winning strategies for your struggle. With a clear picture of the key actors and their roles in policy considerations, you can devise good advocacy strategies.

You can identify the first category of individuals and institutions (direct policy makers) very easily because they are publicly announced as having certain responsibilities. However, identifying the individuals and institutions in the second category (those who influence the decision makers) is challenging since being able to influence policy makers is not something that can be seen. It is not necessary to be visible to influence a decision. Someone living at a distance from the decision maker can still exercise considerable influence in decision taking at local levels.

Table 2.3 gives a summary of an analysis of key actors. This example was created for learning purposes. If you look at this example, it is very simple and clear cut. However, in the real-life formulation of strategies for advocacy it is not so simple. Several such examples will emerge when you plan advocacy initiatives for a real-life issue.

Analysis of Policy Environment

The political system of the country and the democratic culture of the community determine the policy environment as a whole. Working towards such an environment is critical for preparing a good strategy for your advocacy initiative. Policy analysis helps to assess whether policy change is likely to be successful or not.

One of the prerequisites for policy analysis is that there must be some policies operational in the communities with an established form and manner. The policies could be from the government mechanism or from cultural norms based on the traditions of the communities. If the public affairs of

communities are running on an ad hoc basis, policy analysis becomes very difficult. The policy environment remains fragile and unpredictable in countries of high transition. Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Palestine can be taken as examples at present. In general, policy analysis should focus on the following parameters as given in the box below.

> - Can people participate in decision-making processes in relation to the issue you are dealing with? Do channels exist and are they accessible for interested people to participate in?
> - Who controls the major decisions and at what location? – At the district level, state level, national level?
> - Are the issues widely discussed in public? Are people interested in participating in the discussion? Does the media get involved in such discussions?
> - What is the level of priority of the current government regarding the issue you are dealing with? Is the government planning to bring in certain changes? What plans and programmes were discussed during recent years?
> - Is there enough political openness for such policy debates in the country or in the location where people who are affected reside? (See also Table 2.3).

The whole analysis of this sub-section depends upon political openness for policy debates. As one who advocates for the marginalised, you cannot overlook all rules, regulations, and practices that exist in the society. You have to be able to operate your advocacy mission maintaining a minimum level of legitimacy. If you want to go beyond the broader frame of the state law, your mission becomes a much broader political movement targeting change in the system, rather than the policies within the system.

It is obvious that a more democratic society provides more space to NGOs and CBOs to influence policies. Advocacy initiatives are not completely risk free in many contexts. However, democratic society normally poses little risk to different groups participating in political life. Advocacy initiators are one such group. Therefore, advocates have more options to develop advocacy strategies to influence policy decisions in this situation.

In some political systems, policy decisions in certain sectors are made open and in other sectors they are closed. For example, most democratic countries seem open to policy dialogues on issues related to society (health, education, community development, etc.) but closed on issues related to national interest (e.g. defence, security, international relations). Advocates should be aware of this situation while framing advocacy strategies for certain issues. Knowing the informal channels of decision making is also very important. Strategy

formulation for advocacy initiatives is almost impossible without a sound knowledge of how policy decisions are made and who controls such decision-making processes. If you formulate advocacy strategies in an ad hoc manner, the likelihood of gaining success is limited. Advocacy in a closed political system may make sense for some activities, but it does not make much sense for those whose rights are denied at present.

Analysis of the policy environment also includes the extent to which social interactions are taking place on the selected issue. If your issue is already an issue of public debate and many know about it, it will be easier for you to take some steps forward. But if the issue is very new and many people do not know about it, you may need to create public awareness. Then you can expect people to express their opinion in favour of, or opposing your line. In addition, all other social and political factors of the country/state affect your advocacy mission. For example, if there is an election in the near future, your normal strategies for advocacy may not work because all social forces will pay far more attention to the election and the change/retention of the government of the day, rather than to any other policy change. Advocates should be able to strategise their mission accordingly.

International forces impinging on your own government is another important factor to be considered while formulating advocacy strategies. For example, if all external forces (neighbouring countries, donors, bilateral agencies, etc.) are on the opposite pole of the issue, you may not be successful. You should be able to convert such forces in your favour before beginning your advocacy mission.

Information collection for policy analysis

A potential source of information for policy analysis includes government ministries, departments; and regional, state, provincial, or district branches of the government. Similarly, you can also obtain information from bilateral and multilateral agencies – the United Nations, the World Bank, other multinational banks, and NGOs. The public media is an easily and widely accessible source of information. However, you have to be able to verify the information these sources publish.

Academic institutions, academic research, and publications are also an important source of information. Similarly, you can obtain information from the speeches of government officials. It is of course up to you to judge the reliability and accuracy of the information collected from these sources. Sometimes, the information you want is easily available even on the Internet. However, if you are taking up complex issues, you should seek the help of those who are familiar with the issue and who are a rich potential source of information.

Some examples for finding such information and support are given below. If you are dealing with an issue related to local governance, look at the following tactics.

- Read the local newspapers regularly for at least a week to identify interest groups expressing opinions regarding local governance in your constituency.
- Establish a relationship with the public information desk of the concerned ministry and find out about the various commissions formed in the past and their reports. For example, in the case of Nepal, the concerned ministry for local governance issues is the Ministry of Local Development.
- Search the Internet and explore the scenario of other countries with regard to local governance. This kind of information gives you a comparative outlook.
- Obtain copies of government laws from the concerned ministry or from other publishers and read them carefully.
- Contact university professors or intellectuals who are interested in this topic and initiate discussions with them on the historical background and intellectual assessments of the policy environment.

Policy analysis: a case study for discussion

Mining labourers in the Jainta Hills: The Jainta Hills in Meghalaya, India contain a large area devoted to coal mining. For convenience, these hills can be called 'Koilapahad' (which means 'coal mountains'). An assessment conducted by ICIMOD in 2003 showed that mining labourers comprise a large part of the informal labour sector in Koilapahad. The mining area is spread all over the hills and around 40 000 people from the countries of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh work as full-time or seasonal labourers in these mines. The monthly turnover of

the labourers is about INR 2000. From a legal point of view, most of these labourers from Nepal and Bangladesh are illegal migrants. However, some of them have already settled in the nearby hills of Meghalaya, India.

This labour force is contributing extensively to the national economy by providing cheap labour and consequently cheaper coal to consumers, and income for a large portion of the population of different countries. However, the livelihood security of these people is vulnerable. Most of these labourers do not earn enough money to procure reasonable land and housing for their families. The government has introduced laws related to labour security and wage rates but most such matters are settled by informal interactions rather than existing laws. According to law, these labourers are technically illegal and do not have licenses or tax certificates. In addition, the established coal business sector feels threatened by the labourers and fear that any government support for labourers would result in loss of income to them.

The problems of these labourers include lack of security of tenure in their workplace, as well as constant harassment from the police and local authorities. The labourers who have already settled in these hills do not have credit facilities, legal services, or social security. A number of laws have been enacted at the state level to ensure security in the workplace for registered labourers. However, these rules and regulations have not been implemented in good faith by the local authorities.
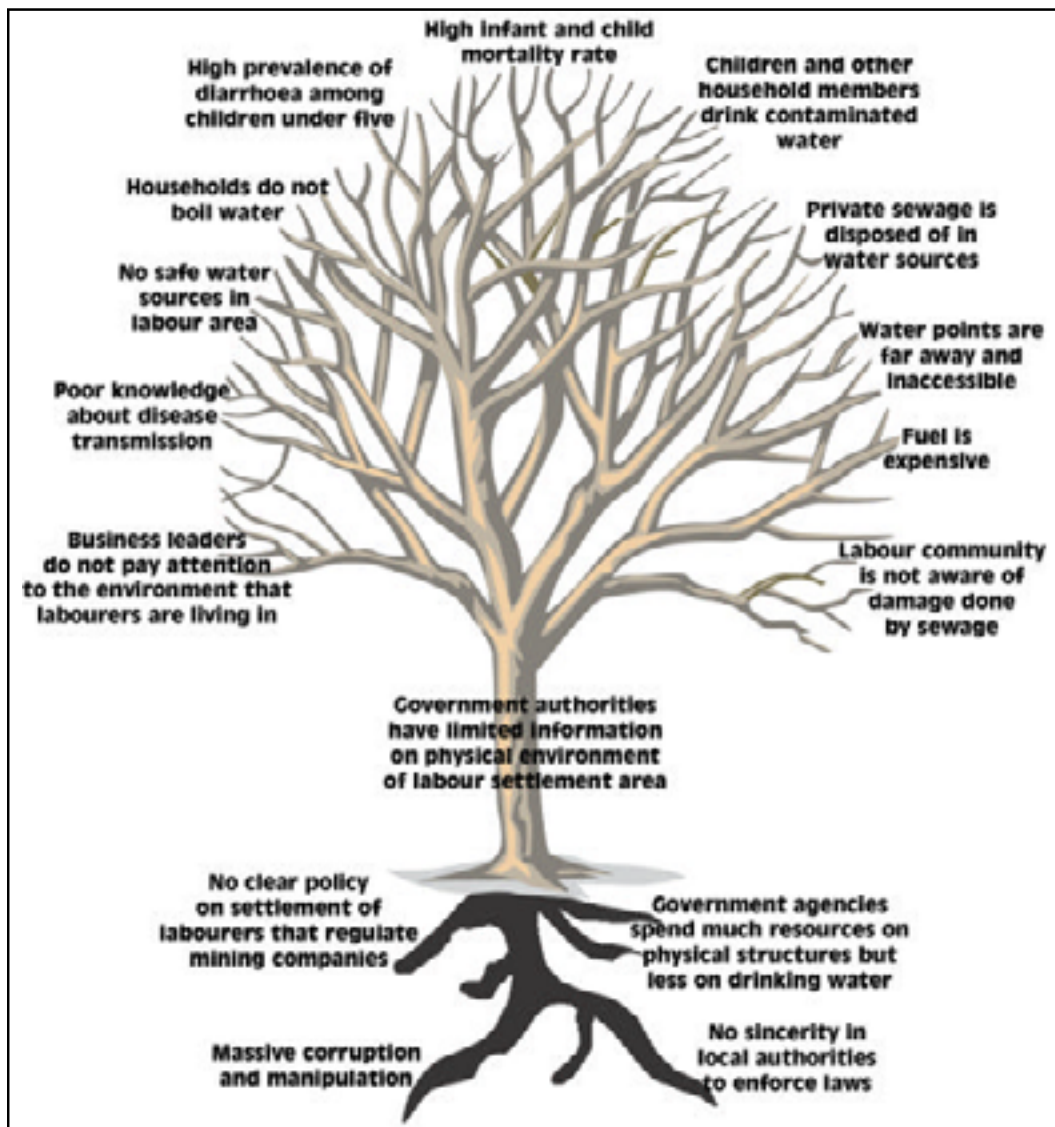
Sometimes these labourers form labour unions, which function like civil society organisations. They also file some of their complaints with local authorities. However, the local authorities trust the contractors and mine owners far more. Nobody listens to the labourers' complaints. There are also some international and national agencies working to improve the livelihoods of these people but they have not had any significant achievements to date.

Questions for discussion
- What problems have been identified? Who are affected and in what location?
- What are the supportive policies for these labourers?
- What policies and practices restrict the basic human rights of these labourers?
- Who are the main actors influencing policy decisions?
- Can these labourers participate in policy decisions?
- Is this analysis helpful for formulating advocacy strategies? If so, explain how.

Summarising Policy Findings

A problem tree is a useful visual technique for summarising the findings of policy analysis. You can use the following steps to present your findings in a problem tree format (Figure 2.3).

High infant and child
mortality rate

High prevalence of
diarrhoea among
children under five

Children and other
household members
drink contaminated
water

Households do not
boil water

Private sewage is
disposed of in
water sources

No safe water
sources in
labour area

Water points are
far away and
inaccessible

Poor knowledge
about disease
transmission

Fuel is
expensive

Business leaders
do not pay attention
to the environment that
labourers are living in

Labour community
is not aware of
damage done
by sewage

Government authorities
have limited information
on physical environment
of labour settlement area

No clear policy
on settlement of
labourers that regulate
mining companies

Government agencies
spend much resources on
physical structures but
less on drinking water

Massive corruption
and manipulation

No sincerity in
local authorities
to enforce laws

Figure 2.3: An example of problem tree analysis for the case of Koilapahad

Problem identification: This can be done for different purposes. It could be for a national programme, a long-range strategic plan, or a simple project. If you are doing this exercise for a larger purpose, the problem could be more general. Examples of general problems are: poverty, livelihood insecurity, violation of human rights, etc. If you want to identify the problem for a specific project, the problem statements could be the poor educational status of women in a particular area/region, the low literacy rate of a tribal group, or the high infant mortality rate of mining labourers. Therefore, you have to be clear about the purpose of this exercise. Finally, you should keep such a problem statement on top of your problem tree.

Direct causes: A direct cause is very close to the problem. For example, the most direct cause of high infant mortality rate could be diarrhoea. There may be more than one direct causes of a problem. You can keep such contributing causes together side by side.

Behavioural causes: For each of the direct causes, the problem tree identifies the behaviours of the affected community that lead to these causes. You can often find several such behaviours under the cause of the problem. For example, contaminated drinking water contributes to diarrhoea but there are several behaviours that contribute to the contamination of drinking water. As shown in the problem tree (Figure 2.3) these could include not boiling water and an unmanaged sewage system. These are the behaviours of the people contributing to water contamination.

Cause that leads to behaviours: This is an even deeper analysis of the causes. The analysis here focuses on why such behaviours appear in communities. To give a simple example, some people are stealing, but why? What factors have made them take to stealing? Regarding contaminated water, we could ask why people behave in a way that causes contamination e.g., lack of awareness of the relationship of their own behaviour to the contamination, lack of potable water supply because of nearby mines/factories, etc. Thus, this analysis goes even deeper to look for the 'causes of the cause'. However, this part of the analysis is 'invisible'. In a real-life situation, you have to discuss the causes in depth with the affected people.

In the example of a problem tree given in Figure 2.3 there are four **root** causes and one **trunk**, which are the causes of the problem – all of which are related to policy. You can carry out advocacy for changes in policy and practices in these areas.

Identification of Options for Policy Change

The problem tree presents the root causes of the problem, i.e., causes which are far away from what has been perceived as the cause of the problem that has been observed on the surface. Such continuous 'digging' often leads to policy or policy implementation causes, which in turn helps to formulate advocacy strategies.

Up to this stage, you will identify the problem and its causes in different layers. By this level of analysis, you can tentatively figure out your expectations, the 'vision' of your advocacy. Do not think that you have only one way of changing this policy or practice. There may be several other options. However, each option cannot give you the same degree of impact. This is the challenging part of your analysis (Figure 2.4)
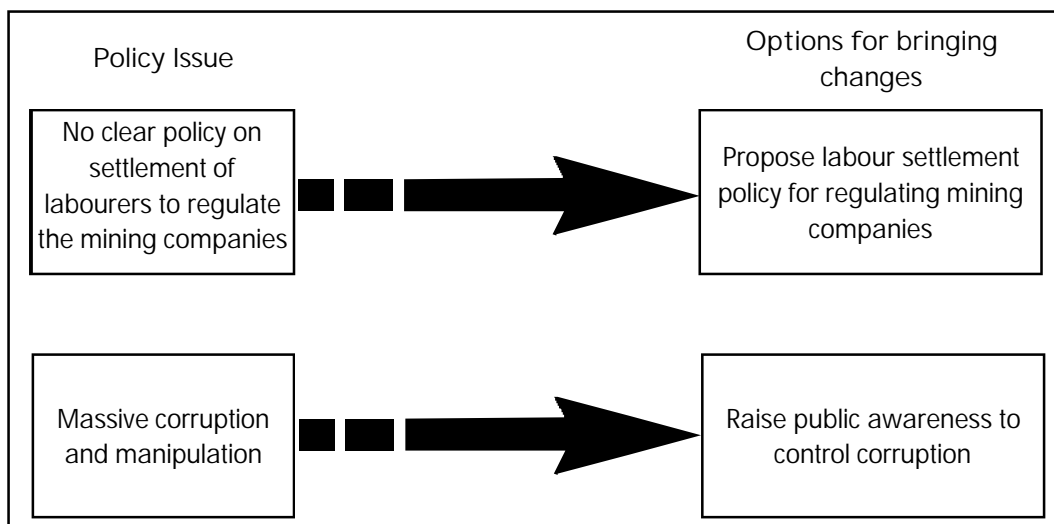
Writing your different options in a matrix format (see Table 2.4) may help you think about the different means available to you for changing policies and practices. You can set your own parameters for measuring difficulties and impacts. In the case of the matrix below, would it be more feasible to choose option 'C' for your advocacy strategy? You can also choose option 'A' but does option 'C' look more achievable and does it create greater empowerment of the people? The selected options can be spelt out in a matrix.

Table 2.4: Options for policy change

Options	Level of difficulty	Level of impact
Option 'A'	50/100	80/100
Option 'B'	90/100	50/100
Option 'C'	40/100	70/100

This kind of analysis opens up many choices to allow you to consider the best option for your policy change mission. Your analysis should also include the following questions.

- Which of the policy options is likely to have the largest and most lasting impact in this community?
- What will be the worst outcome if you do not do anything?
- Which option is likely to be achievable in terms of time, cost, and risk?
- Which option is likely to get support from other organisations?
- Which option do you think more people are opposed to?
- Do you have the necessary expertise for the selected option?
- In which option do you have a comparative advantage?
- Do you have enough know-how, readiness, and an appropriate management structure for risk mitigation?

Policy Issue		Options for bringing changes
No clear policy on settlement of labourers to regulate the mining companies	➡	Propose labour settlement policy for regulating mining companies
Massive corruption and manipulation	➡	Raise public awareness to control corruption

Figure 2.4: Variations in policy options

Preconditions for an Advocacy Initiative

At this stage, you have to decide whether you will take up a particular issue for advocacy or not. For example, you might decide (in collaboration with the people who are affected) that the time is not suitable for advocacy for policy change on the issue selected. Or you could come to the conclusion that although the time is appropriate to initiate an advocacy initiative, you do not have enough funding to cover the cost to complete the mission. Likewise, you could conclude that you do not have the necessary expertise to take up the best option. A cost-benefit analysis can also be carried out before formulating advocacy strategies, as follows.

- It is possible that your advocacy mission may bring risk to your organisation, your partners, and project participants. For example, the concerned authority can ask your organisation to leave the place. What will you do then?
- As an advocate, your opposition group may arrest you, or may blacklist you as an individual. What will your organisation do if this happens?
- Although it is different from party politics, advocacy is a political activity. Can you manage this process as a development agency? Is it acceptable to your organisation or the board of governors of your organisation?
- Sometimes, the involvement of a particular group or organisation in the policy debate may actually make the situation even worse because of some other extraneous reasons. What do you think about this? Are you sure that your organisation's involvement will, at least, not worsen the problem?
- Remember that the solution to all problems is not only advocacy. There may be other programmes or programmatic approaches to get easy, less time-consuming, and less expensive solutions to the problem. Have you thought about these options?

- Generally, advocacy for policy change is a time-consuming process. You cannot plan exactly when you will be successful. If the problem needs immediate action, advocacy may not be feasible. For example, if people are dying of hunger, your advocacy for a poverty alleviation policy may not immediately help those who are suffering. Have you analysed the situation of the affected people properly?

While reading the above questions, many people may be hesitant to even explore the option of advocacy. The intention of these questions is not to 'frighten' the advocate. However, this is a very complex decision that you are about to take. Therefore, the questions are a reminder of the absolute need to think critically and pay extra attention to the risk factors of advocacy. Ultimately you will not lose anything if you discuss all these points critically. Forewarned is often forearmed.

As an advocate, you may be extra capable. However, the kind of decision making required here is beyond a single person's capacity as it impacts on large numbers of people including your own co-workers and the people themselves. Therefore, you have to discuss all of these questions in your group or management team. Using the information in this chapter, you can prepare a set of criteria to be used as and when required for selecting advocacy options.

Summary worksheet for policy analysis

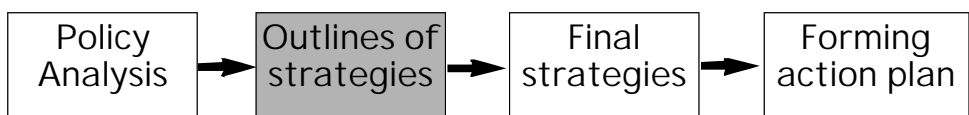| Steps	Some questions to explore	Your note
1. Identification of policy issues	• What are the problems you are dealing with? Whom do these problems affect? • What are the main policy issues in relation to selected problems — i.e., absence of policy, inadequate policy, or improper enforcement of policy?	
2. Identification of key actors and institutions	• Who are the direct decision makers? • Who influences the decision makers? • Are policy makers and interest groups showing interest in bringing about change? What position and opinion do they have? What resources do they have?	
3. Analysis of policy environment	• Can people participate in policy decisions? What channels exist for them? • What is the location of key decisions? Who controls the decisions? • Are the selected issues becoming of interest to people? Are the various channels of the media highlighting the issues? • What is the priority of the current government? What is the history of these issues? • What changes are occurring in the political arena? Is the election coming closer?	
4. Summary of policy findings	• What are the direct causes of the problems you have selected? • What are the positions and opinions of policy makers? • What is the attitude of policy makers?	
5. Identification of options for policy change	• What are the impacts you desire from policy change? • What are your best options for policy change? • What will happen if nothing is done? • What options are likely to get public support? • Who will lead the advocacy process for which policy options?	

3

Outlining Advocacy Strategies

> This chapter presents a simple guideline for outlining advocacy strategies, the second step in the advocacy initiative planning framework given earlier. This step includes selection of the issue, selection of the target audience, setting a policy goal, and identification of allies and opponents. This chapter highlights the way that all information collected through the process presented here can be moulded.

From the previous chapter you may have realised more clearly that poverty and discrimination are connected directly or indirectly with policy considerations. Identification of the root causes and effects of this connection gives you the opportunity to select advocacy as a tool to overcome or minimise the broader problems that mountain people are suffering from.

After identifying all causes and affects, you may be ambitious. You may want to deal with several issues in order to resolve the variety of problems faced by the communities you are working with. However, a realistic evaluation will probably convince you that you cannot deal with all the issues that you are interested in. Therefore you have to maintain a focus only on certain issues (Figure 3.1).

The following steps will help you to maintain your focus as you develop the basic outline for your advocacy strategy.

* Select the policy issues that can be effectively addressed through advocacy and which will have the greatest impact on the problem.
* Select as target audiences those who can support you in your attempt to influence policy makers.

Figure 3.1: Stage two in the horizontal framework

- Set a specific policy goal for your advocacy initiative.
- Identify potential allies and opponents.

Selection of Policy Issues

As a result of analysing one problem, many policy issues may be identified. Some policy issues are very distant from the current problem. For example, in the problem tree presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.3), infant mortality is apparently very far removed from the issue of corruption in the government bureaucracy, but as your analysis has shown, it is actually well connected.

Traditional development programmes used to concentrate only on the symptoms of the problem because that is where the suffering is immediate. As a result, they were often not able to affect or change the root causes. For example, one project would introduce different vaccines to reduce the infant mortality rate, while another organisation would train local people on safe drinking water and sanitation aspects. However, a sufficiently deep analysis would indicate that in the case of infant mortality for example, more than one policy issue exists that underlies the problem. However, you may not be able to deal with all issues related to the problem. The following tips will help you select an appropriate issue for your advocacy initiative.

Direct contribution to the problem: Some policy issues contribute to problems directly. For example, in the infant mortality rate example, a labour settlement policy can directly contribute to the problem. Your problem analysis gives a clear indication of the extent a policy issue influences the problem. Therefore you have to be able to select those issues which contribute most directly to the problems at hand.

> Key criteria for selecting policy issues
> - Direct contribution of the policy to the problem
> - Visible impact on a large number of people
> - Likely to be successful with the capacity that you actually have
> - Potential for working in coalitions with other like-minded organisations
> - Risk assessment indicates a manageable risk
> - Potential for your organisation to advocate effectively

Impact on a large number of people: Policy issues usually have an effect on a large number of people. If you are able to make a small change in one carefully-chosen are of policy this can generate impact on a wider scale. Traditional needs-based development could not produce such impacts in the communities concerned because it tended not to touch the underpinning policies. Therefore, it is recommended that advocates should select only those issues that can generate benefits for a large number of people.

For example, if an advocacy initiative brings about a labour settlement policy in Koilapahad, its impact can be felt by more than 40 000 labourers in a sustainable manner. But if on the other hand an organisation initiates two drinking water schemes in the labour area, the benefit will only be felt by a limited number of people for a certain number of years, the project not being sustainable. The analysis of the infant mortality problem led to the identification of four policy issues, but not all of them will give equivalent benefits to a large number of people.

Likelihood of success: It is essential to estimate how far one's advocacy effort targeted at policy change is likely to succeed. Since advocacy work in itself is usually a very drawn-out process, if a frank estimation of success is not made, people could lose hope and give up the struggle. While making a logical estimate of the likelihood of success, several factors can be reviewed. For example, if policy makers are established in an environment that allows for advocacy, the likelihood of success becomes high. If the policy makers face heavy opposition from other political parties to the proposed changes, the likelihood of success is low. Therefore you have to be able to assess the likelihood of all options based on your policy analysis and must select those options which carry the most likelihood of success.

Potential for working in coalition: The capacity of any organisation to change policy can be enhanced when it joins with other organisations in advocacy. Therefore, opportunities for working with different levels of partners and alliances should be taken into account when selecting the issue. If you think no one will be interested in joining hands to take on the issue, the likelihood of success becomes low. If you find that there are several like-minded

organisations willing to work together, this could indicate that this is a more appropriate option.

Risk assessment: An advocacy initiative is not one hundred per cent risk free. Therefore, you must assess the level and gravity of the risk. The risks arising from your advocacy efforts in one area may also affect other programmes running under your organisation. Your organisation's relationship with the government may be damaged, your credibility may be lost, your staff can be blacklisted, and your organisation may lose the benefits it presently receives from different sources. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a benefit-harm analysis while selecting the options.

Potential for your organisation to advocate effectively: You should assess yourself and decide in your team whether you are a legitimate, capable, leading organisation, and visionary in taking the lead in any advocacy initiative. Remember that organisations or advocates cannot deal with all the issues seen/ identified in the community. An analysis of the situation based on the above-mentioned criteria can be presented in matrix form (Table 3.1). The area of labour settlement in Koilapahad is taken as the context for this example.

Table 3.1: An example of selecting a policy issue

Criteria	Policy issue 1 No clear policy to regulate mining companies on labourers' settlements	Policy Issue 2 No sincerity among local authorities to enforce laws
Direct contribution to the problem	This issue has a direct link with the main problems of the area of labour settlement	This issue also has a direct relation to the problem. However, sincerity entirely depends upon individuals.
Impact on a large number of people	Policy on labour settlement area touches entire labour force working in the mining area.	This issue also covers all labourers but a monitoring mechanism does not exist.
Likelihood of success	Political leaders and the general public are apparently interested in introducing such a law.	No one is interested in changing the mindset and traditional practices of individuals.
Risk assessment	It looks low risk because everyone wants a systematic labour settlement in the area.	Possibility of developing resistance at an individual or collective level.
Potential for your organisation to advocate effectively	This issue matches with organisational vision, mission, and goal. The organisation also has enough staff members to deal with this issue.	It is very difficult to go for an invisible reformation. It may take a long time and much energy to change the individual working attitude of staff members.
Potential for working in coalition	The organisations working around the mining hills are also willing to join hands.	No coalition looks possible to work on this issue.

This is an example for learning purposes. In this case, you can choose policy issue 1, because it has elements that are applicable to the majority of the criteria. You can also have your own criteria for selecting an appropriate issue for advocacy in a real-life situation.

Selection of Target Audience

The target audience is the persons or group of people who are responsible for bringing the policy change that you hope to achieve at the end of your advocacy initiative. Whether it is a new policy or the proper enforcement of an existing policy, it is essential to identify decision makers. Your target audience could be the direct decision makers as well as those who are not direct decision makers but who influence decision making. The target audience can be grouped into two categories.

Primary audience: People in this category are responsible for taking direct decisions on the issues that you are dealing with. For example, the state minister for mining could be directly responsible for taking policy decisions in regard to the settlement of labourers working in the mines. The minister of forests is directly responsible for taking forest-related decisions in the case of the tax imposed on CFUGs in Nepal. People believe that parliamentarians are directly responsible for the formation of rules and regulations. However, concerned ministers and their secretariats are the ones primarily/directly responsible for preparing drafts and submitting them for final approval. Therefore, the bureaucracy of that particular ministry and the ministers are considered the primary target audience in most advocacy cases.

Secondary audience: People in this category do not take decisions themselves but influence the decision makers to a great extent. For example, all contractors who are taking benefits from mining contracts are members of the secondary audience in the case of the Koilapahad labour issue. Similarly, all timber-related business holders belong to the secondary audience in the case of forestry in Nepal. Sometimes, parliamentarians themselves could be the secondary audience because they may be willing to change certain policies but do not have enough of a majority in parliament.

Sometimes, the secondary audience can be the best route of reaching the primary audience because these are the people who maintain a closer relationship with the decision makers. For example, if you want to meet and talk to the minister of a certain ministry, you have to go through that minister's personal assistant (PA). In this case, you can consider the PA to be a member of the secondary audience.

Knowing your audience is critical when planning an advocacy initiative. The policy analysis gives you a clear indication of the audience that you have to deal with. The primary audience is easy to identify. However, identification of the secondary audience is not so clear-cut. You will be faced with a series of secondary audiences for any one issue. Therefore you should focus on those people with the greatest ability to influence your primary audience. Figure 3.2 gives an example of target audiences for the Koilapahad case.
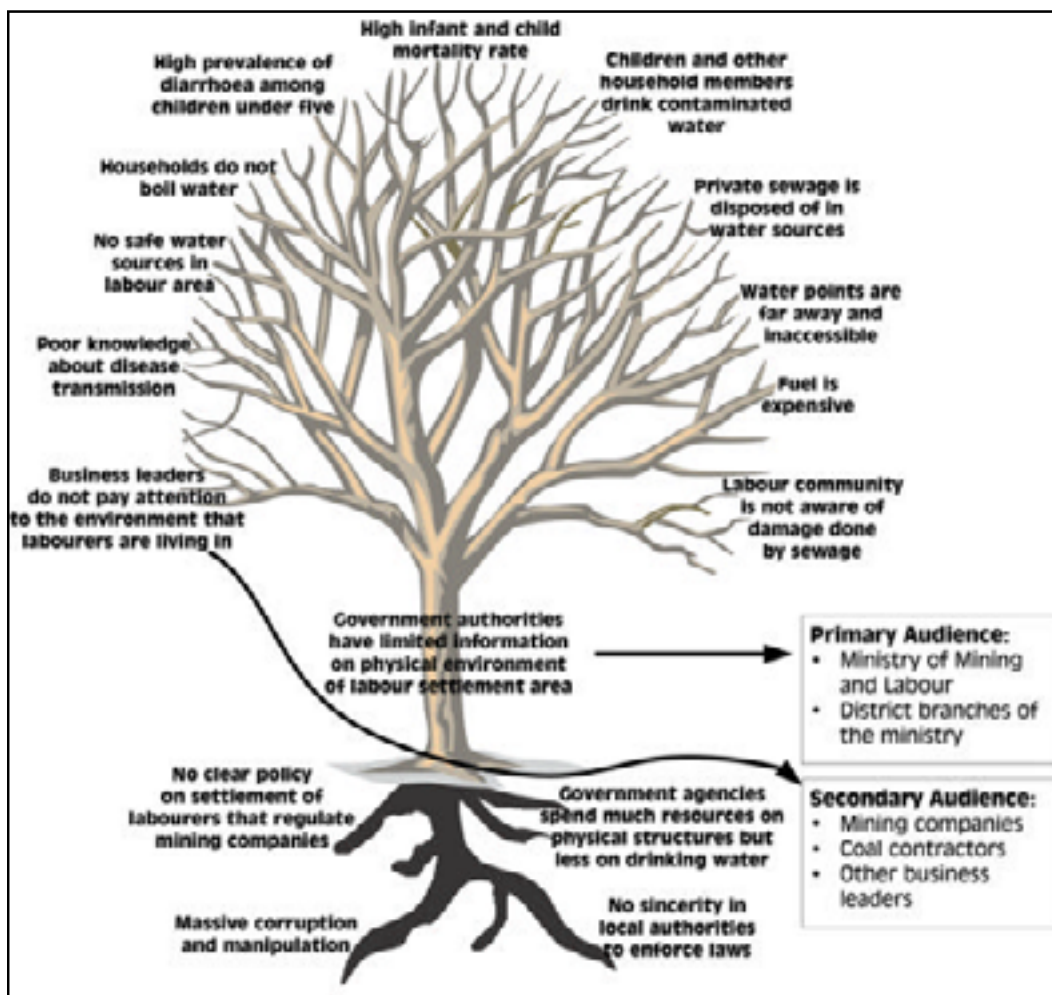

Primary audience

Remember that audiences are always people, not institutions. The primary audience are those people within institutions who have the authority to take decisions. For example, the general manager of a factory is the primary audience if the changes you want to bring are within that factory. If you want to bring changes to a hospital management, the general administrator of the hospital will be your primary audience. If you want to bring changes to national education policy, the minister of education is your primary audience. You can cite several examples according to your case.

Selection of Policy Goal

Selecting goals at different levels before starting any intervention is a way of doing things in a systematic way. Such goals should be very specific so that all stakeholders involved in the activity have the same understanding. If the goal is described in vague terms, different people will interpret it differently. Therefore, a goal set for advocacy should be based on the 'SMART' principle.
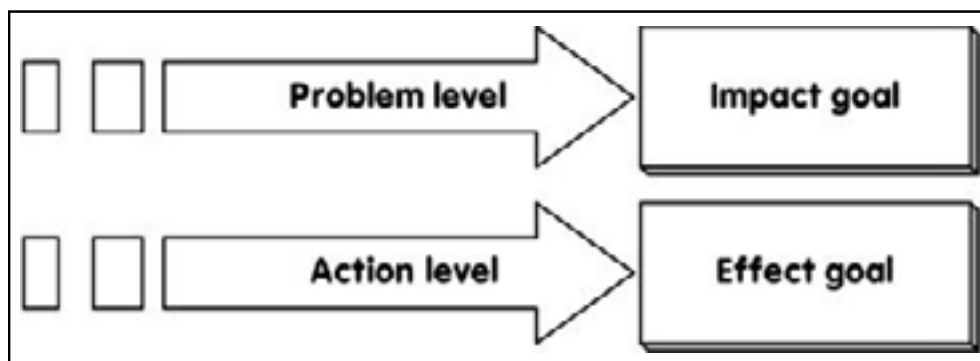
S = Specific **M** = Measurable   **A** = Achievable   **R** = Realistic   **T** = Time-bound

Figure 3.2: An example of target audiences in the Koilapahad case

In other words, an advocacy goal should be able to indicate what will change, who will make such changes, what degree of change is expected, and by when the changes will take place. Different goals can be set for different levels. See the following examples, and Figure 3.3.

Impact goal: The final or ultimate impact goal of an advocacy initiative is not very different from the goal of a normal project. Ultimately, changes in policy should bring positive changes in people's lives. This could be in terms of reducing poverty, discrimination, increasing access and opportunities, and attaining more rights. If policy changes do not bring any improvement in people's lives, advocacy for these kinds of changes do not make much sense to poor people. Therefore, the final goal of advocacy must be able to address the core problem that you have identified. An example of the 'impact goal' related to the labourers' area of settlement in Koilapahad could be as follows:
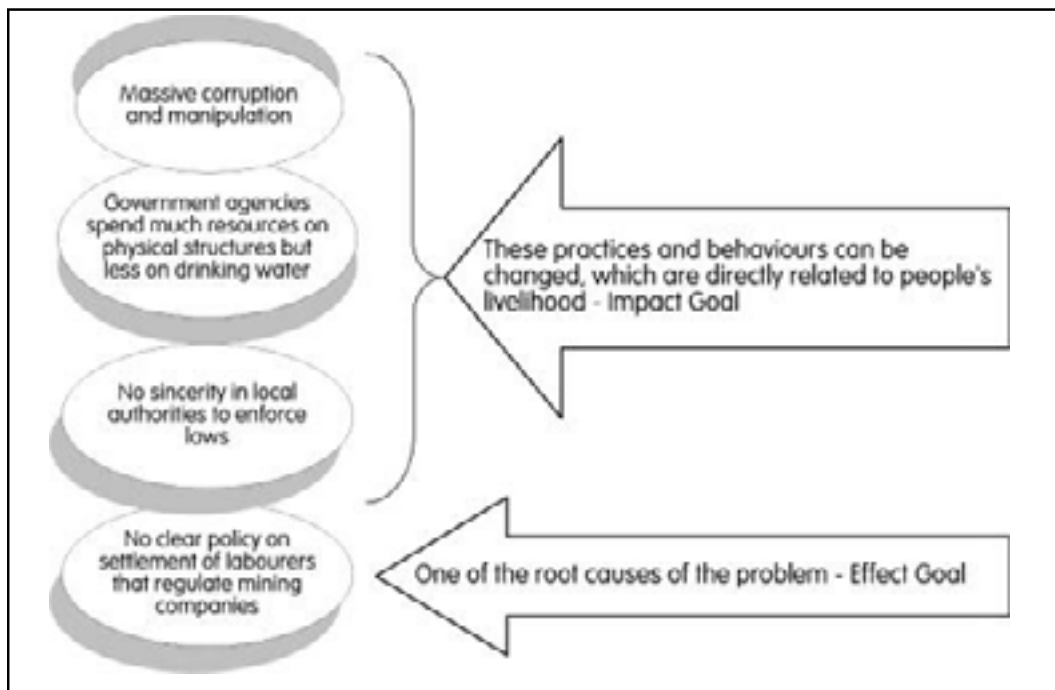
Figure 3.3: Examples of different goals

"**By the end of 2006, the infant mortality rate of 20 000 labourers living in Koilapahad decreased by 30% from baseline status.**"

Effect goal: Suppose you are asking policy makers to take certain decisions. If they take such decisions, these actions are related to your effect goal. In other words, your voice influenced them very much. These actions may not have generated much impact on people's lives but they have taken action, as you were demanding. These actions could be in terms of setting a policy, changing something in the existing policy, changing working styles, changing behaviours, etc. An example of the 'effect goal' in relation to the area of labour settlement in Koilapahad could be:

"**By the end of 2004, the State Ministry of Labour and Housing passed the labour settlement area management act and enacted it in the Koilapahad labour settlement area.**"

You can take the same example of problem analysis as was presented in Chapter 2 in connection with the effort to set goals at different levels. For a clear understanding, the following matrix (Figure 3.4) can be used. You can prepare this kind of matrix in your own context for a real-life advocacy planning effort.

Figure 3.4: Example goal in labour settlement Koilapahad issue

Based on the above facts, you can outline an advocacy strategy for Koilapahad as follows below.

The case of Koilapahad is an example based on information collected during field visits and is presented here only for learning purposes. When you are planning your advocacy initiative, the following table (3.2) might help you to create similar matrixes to plan your strategies.

Identification of Allies and Opponents

In a general sense, your allies are your supporters and your opponents are those people who are against your proposal for policy change. However, not all of your supporters will be interested in working with you. Some people are willing to give support but are not willing to join in actions. But some of the supporters will be interested in joining your advocacy initiative and would also be interested in taking credit for any successes. These latter individuals are the people whom we can really call 'allies' in advocacy.

Identification of allies: Advocacy for policy change is not possible through a single individuals or a lone organisation's effort. Experience from many advocacy initiatives indicates that the joint efforts of several organisations and individuals are more likely to minimise risks, draw the attention of policy makers to key policy issues, and get the expected results. Therefore, it is your

Table 3.2: An example of tabulating different audiences

Policy issue	Lack of labour settlement management policy for coal mining labourers in Koilapahad.
Primary audience	Ministry of Housing and Mining, the State of Meghalaya, India (This is an example for learning purposes. Name of the ministry could be different in a different state/ country).
Secondary audience	Business leaders, coal mining contractors, and other contractors in coal business.
Impact goal	By the end of 2006, infant mortality rate of 20 000 labourer families living in Koilapahad decreasing by 30% from baseline status.
Effect goal	By the end of 2004, State Ministry of Labour and Housing passing labour settlement area management act and enacting it in the Koilapahad labour settlement area.

challenge to identify those who are interested in working with you for the same purpose. If you are able to work in coalitions, you will have the following advantages:

- Increased resources, experience, credibility and visibility
- Increased likelihood of success
- The opportunity to develop the capacity of less experienced members
- Collective strength for all members
- A feeling of security in case of risk

A coalition of like-minded organisations and individuals can be formed based on the issue and goal you have selected for policy change. After achieving results in a specific issue, such a coalition can be discontinued or can be continued to take up another issue of a similar nature. Recently, the tendency of issue-based coalitions has emerged as a viable way of functioning in different countries. In order to create a coalition, you must not assume that until your initiative came on the scene nothing has happened with regard to the selected issue. There may be others working for the same purpose already. You have to pay attention to the following questions:

- Are other organisations working for the same issue?
- If yes, at what level and in which location are they working? Do coalitions exist already for the same purpose under someone's leadership?
- Are they willing to invite you to be a coalition member?
- Can you contribute to that coalition? Or is it a problem for you to join that coalition?
- What roles do these organisations want to give to you?
- Can you figure out the advantages and disadvantages of joining with them?
- Do other organisations see you as a 'value adding' partner?

If there is already a coalition, you can join with them if the roles given to your organisation are acceptable to you. There is no need to form a new coalition for

the same purpose. Duplication of the coalition is more harmful than not having any coalition for advocacy. If you are forming a new coalition, you have to pay attention to the following questions:

- Are you confident with regard to the credibility of your allies?
- Do they add value to your advocacy mission?
- Do they agree with your value, vision, and mission of advocacy initiatives?
- Are they ready to share the potential risks?
- Do you find acceptable the conditions of resource sharing during advocacy?

Identification of opponents: This is as important as the identification of allies. This is the process of knowing your opponents and analysing the reasons why they are opposing your proposal of policy/practice changes. If you do not know the people and the grounds of opposition to your proposal, your advocacy message may proceed in the wrong direction. Your target audience may not be the correct one. Advocacy carried out in this situation is likely to produce fewer or no successes.
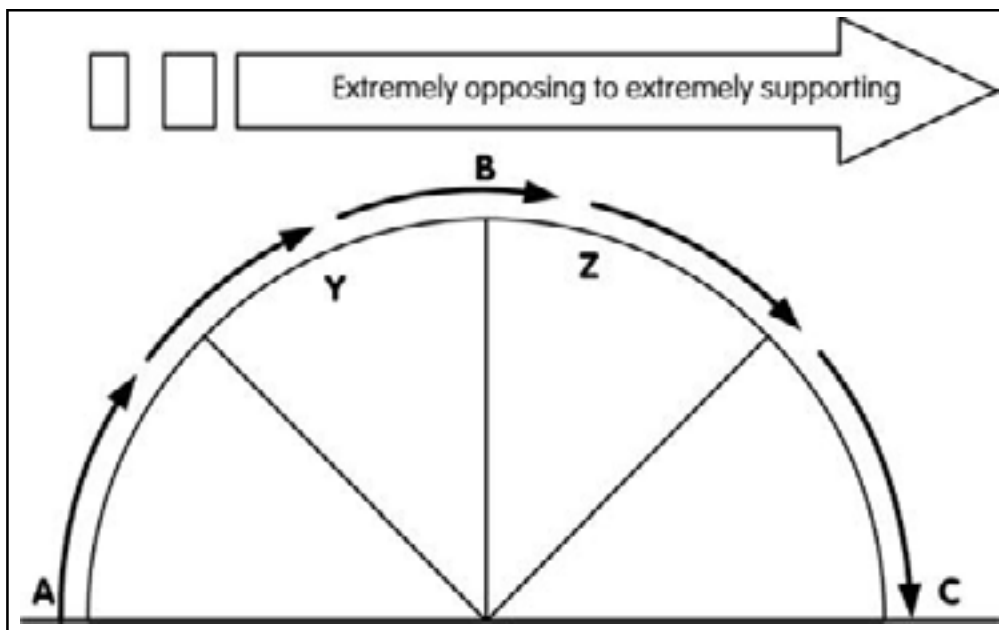
In some cases, your opponents could be your secondary audience for advocacy initiatives. Your ultimate aim should be to change your opponents into supporters. If you cannot get them to support you, at the very least, you should try and change them into a neutral force in terms of their influence in decision making. However, you have to follow fair, just, and intellectual ways of dealing with them. In particular, you should consider the following questions:

- Have you prepared a list of organisations or influential individuals that oppose your proposal?
- Have you investigated the reasons why they oppose your idea?
- What is their logical argument? Did you listen to them and analyse their logic?
- Have you analysed the opinions of opponents?
- Do you know the political or ideological biases of your opponents?
- Have you assessed the power poles of your opponents?

When considering the above questions, the person who is willing to analyse the policy environment must carry out research in an unbiased manner. However small the issue, you need to carry out systematic research on its policy environment. Information in relation to the above questions is not available from formal sources. For example, while talking to someone, you may feel that the person is very supportive but in reality the person may be playing a dual role.

In a real-life situation, you will find people have different interests. You cannot categorise them into only two categories – supporters and opponents. The following power diagram plays a vital role (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Social force analysis

A = people in this area are very much opposed to your proposal
B = people in this area are completely neutral about your proposal
C = people in this area are fully supportive of your proposal
Y = they are not active but tend to support the opposition
Z = they are not active but tend to favour your proposal

Therefore, in reality, you will get only a few supporters and only a few opponents. The majority of people stay in the Y and Z areas. Sometimes, if you cannot pay proper attention, Z can be converted into Y. Sometimes, if your strategies are strong, Y can be converted into Z or C. The movement of people from one camp to another is a continuous process. Another reality is that the majority of people always remain in Y+Z areas, which are safer zones for them. Therefore, you have to keep these realities in mind while identifying opponents for your advocacy initiative.

Identifying allies and opponents: a case from Nepal

In Nepal, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been managing an integrated poverty alleviation project known as 'Poverty Alleviation Through Social Mobilisation'. The project has introduced, tested, and implemented the concept in selected areas of Nepal since 1992. The main thrusts of the concept are organising people as people's organisations, and creating capital-enhancing skills to generate additional income at the grass roots. This concept is heavily influenced by the rural support programmes which are being implemented in different parts of Pakistan.

From the outset, this project has been working closely with government authorities at different levels – national, district, and village. Through UNDP the project advocated mainstreaming the concept as a national programme for poverty alleviation in Nepal. The project was also able to introduce some new regulations through the concerned authorities of the government. For example, the creation of a central fund for poverty alleviation and the creation of local development boards under the umbrella of district development committees.

Over the years, other donors willing to work for poverty alleviation in Nepal have expressed interest in joining the initiative at different levels. However, this process could not be fully realised. Some of the reasons given (from unauthorised channels) were that donors were not ready to be lost within the huge bureaucracy of UNDP and the government of Nepal.

Consequently, the concept remained largely within UNDP and restricted to some selected areas where the project was implemented for many years. It could not be expanded beyond this to those areas where most of the Nepal's poor are living. Although some US and European donors are also carrying out somewhat similar poverty alleviation programmes through other projects in various districts, correlation and coordination between these various efforts is not as effective as it could be.

Some of the community organisations created by the UNDP project have already amassed a huge amount of group savings. They are also distributing small loans to community members without much complication or demands for collateral. However, few of these groups could be developed further, and they remain as saving and credit organisations that barely cover even a small part of the regional area of focus of this concept. Thus a good concept, practically tested and proven in Nepal, could still not be mainstreamed as a programme for poverty alleviation.

Questions for discussion
- Can you work out who are the potential opponents?

- Which of the agencies mentioned in the case could be potential allies and why?

- What options has UNDP to mainstream the project in this current situation?

- Do you see any opportunity to convert opponents into allies?

Strategic Networking: A Tool to Influence

Decide to network
Use every letter your write, every conversation you have
Every meeting you attend to express your fundamental beliefs and dreams
Affirm to others the vision of the world you want
Network through thought, Network through action
Network through love, Network through the spirit
You are the centre of a network; you are the centre of the world
You are a free immensely powerful source of life and goodness
Affirm it
Spread it
Radiate it
Think day and night about it
And you will see a miracle happen;
The greatness of your own life,
In a world of big powers, media and monopolies
But of four and a half billion individuals
Networking is the new freedom, the new democracy, a new form of happiness.

Robert Muller

Background

The concept of the network came from electronic engineering and started acquiring prominence in the development field during the early 1970s because of an intense realisation among activists about the limitations of individual efforts in dealing with the complex development issues of contemporary society. The experiences of associations across voluntary organisations were not very encouraging, although several long-standing associational ventures were in existence even before the independence of India, such as the Association of Sarva Seva Farm, Bharat Sevak Samaj, and the Indian Cooperative Union. The Indian Adult Education Association, the All India Women's Conference and the YMCA and YWCA are further examples of national and international federations of local-level voluntary organisations in the country, but most of these associations either cater for the need of one issue or one section of the society[1].

---

[1] This article was written by Mr. Anil Kumar Singh, Voluntary Action Network India (VANI). Mr. Singh has been working in this network as Executive Secretary for more than 15 years. He also presented this paper during the Regional Meeting of the Working Group on 5-7 July 2004 held in Kathmandu. This paper is based on his experiences about networks of civil society organisations in India.

Pre-Independence, associations played a significant role in the freedom movement, but many such associations have not been able to make the kind of impact for which they were formed. Most of them have lost their relevance as associations today. The most prominent reason for their failure is that they could not keep their separate identity as associations. Since they involved themselves in implementing schemes, they created a situation where it was difficult to call them an association. In fact, the role of an association or federation is quite different from that of an organisation.

Needs of associations or federations

Networks, although a late 20th century phenomenon, have become part and parcel of the development scenario all over the world today. The word 'network' is defined as formal and informal institutional framework with loose or structured parameters, with detailed tasks and responsibilities for members, and so on. Networks help to link individuals, groups, and organisations from various walks of life and provide greater strength to people working for a common cause. Networks perform a wide range of functions – from sharing and dissemination of information to acting as a pressure group to influence policies. Members of a network lend valuable support to each other and help members in perspective building or developing innovative approaches to developmental activities. Networking denotes 'action', a process that would involve a number of actors and would create a dynamic relationship between and among the various actors of civil society.

Voluntary organisations want to associate with each other for three main reasons. Firstly, because most organisations work in small, limited, often remote, rural areas at the grassroots level; remaining focused on that particular socio-political context, which leads to feelings of isolation. As social change agents they find themselves more and more isolated and alone in the larger socio-political context.

Secondly, after some years of work at the micro level, in a limited set of villages and slums, many voluntary agencies begin to realise that they cannot move beyond their local and immediate context unless they find ways to influence the macro levels. As this realisation grows, attempts at association or federation start. Associations, through a process of federating, are seen as a way of developing collective strength among voluntary organisations to enable them to influence macro issues, policies, and frameworks.

Thirdly, voluntary organisations come together because of the need for protection. In situations where the state or other vested interests in society have posed a threat or made an attack on voluntary organisations, there has been a simultaneous response to come together, to associate, to federate, in order to protect the space, the role, the legitimacy, and the credibility of the voluntary

organisations. In situations of the tightening of regulatory procedures, harassment, or intimidation by government agencies and law-and-order machinery, or dominant control by donors, many attempts to come together and federate have been made.

Necessity of networks

The traditional form of organising mechanisms neither provide space for individuals to interact freely with other organised entities nor do they allow a free flow of ideas. On the other hand, networks not only provide the opportunity but also encourage their members to interact, exchange information, begin dialogue, and initiate joint action among those who may be placed in different organisational settings. These settings might be voluntary organisations, government or academic institutions, trade unions, political parties, women's organisations, mass movements, or campaigns. Networks also create the possibility of individuals and organisations working on a similar issue, with somewhat different perspectives, to come together, share information, their knowledge base, expertise, skills, resources, and capacities in order to work together on specific issues.

The role of the network is important in fulfilling the needs of voluntary organisations and for creating an environment favourable to working towards the stated objectives, ensuring people's involvement, influencing the policy makers, and also providing a forum for taking up major issues concerning voluntary organisations.

Needs for networking

At the basic level, the purpose is of communication across parties with whom we would like to establish linkages that are necessary to overcome isolation. Networking allows the free flow of experiences and ideas across individuals and groups. Communication in a network can be initiated by anyone and received by anyone. This is the most crucial purpose of a network. The Internet is a classic example for this.

Secondly, solidarity across parties, the sharing of good ideas, and support during a crisis is very important for the existence of any network. Solidarity could be either material or emotional. In solidarity, there is an element of mutual accountability.

The third purpose is of influencing others – the pubic at large, the political parties, the media, the corporate sector, etc. The shared analysis and common vision among various actors of civil society form the basis of influencing public policy. Public policy in the contemporary context may be made by a local, regional, or national government; or a bilateral agency, a multilateral agency, or other actors such as multi-national companies at the national and global levels.

The fourth purpose is that of mobilising energy and resources, particularly among individuals. New ideas, designs, and perspectives emerge as a result of new ways of relating to each other. Networks emerging around socially difficult issues such as child labour, environment protection, violence against women, or human rights, are able to mobilise individuals, groups, energy, and resources among themselves.

Lastly, networks promote linkage building. Bringing together like-minded individuals, groups, and institutions around a shared development agenda can be facilitated through a network. The purpose is not to coordinate the activities of those individuals or groups but to facilitate through systematic communication, the sharing of information, experience, and ideas.

Networks can be used for variety of purposes. They can be used for achieving short-term as well as long-term goals. Different networks have been used to achieve different goals and different networks may be relevant for different situations. The relevance of a network can be briefly assessed on the following aspects.

- Networks can be used as a vehicle for identifying, articulating, and discussing issues of major concern which are difficult to deal with inside the existing institutional framework.
- Networks can become an alternative arena for the elaboration and sharpening of new ideas, visions, and perspectives. This is largely because new ideas entail a critique of and departure from the established modes. The existing institutional framework tends to curtail such possibilities.
- A network can provide support to grassroots organisations in times of hardship or when faced with retaliation from vested interest groups. A network can be especially useful for organisations working for awareness building, organising people for their rights, and for social change. These types of organisations inevitably invite retaliation from those with vested interests. Networks are also necessary for dealing with such retaliations as a political strategy.
- Networking can become a relevant strategy for resisting the increasingly diminishing democratic space and functioning at various levels in a given local, national, regional, and international situation.
- A network can be utilised to identify, encourage and revitalise individuals and small groups to support the cause of social transformation.
- A network can be used for the exchange of information, experience and vision across the culture, system, countries, and continents.

Besides these, a network could be the most efficient and flexible mechanism for sharing information, experience and ideas across people; from various ideologies, groups, and organisations spread geographically and working on diverse issues.

A network of voluntary organisations and people's organisations can play a major role in the collection and dissemination of information, highlighting people's analysis and viewpoints for building public opinion. Such a network can also lobby and undertake advocacy strategies with policy makers and elected representatives of the people, thereby building solidarity among voluntary organisations and/or people's organisations and preparing a strategy to put pressure on the government. A network's role is crucial because most of the time outside factors play an important part in deciding a country's developmental mode and direction, especially in developing countries.

Types of networks that exist in India

In India, five types of networks of voluntary organisations exist today.

- Issue-based networks
- Area-specific networks
- Ideological networks
- Funder-led or funder-driven networks
- Broad-based networks

Issue-based networks: During the 1970s and 1980s, several issue-based networks emerged to cater to the issue-specific needs of voluntary organisations, such as health, the environment, women, etc. These networks can further be divided into two categories – structured networks and loose networks. Structured networks are very effective in information collection and dissemination, lobbying/advocacy, and in articulating and developing alternative viewpoints; whereas loose networks mainly mobilise people for campaigns and movements. The constraint is that in practice, both the types of networks are antagonistic. Both are critical of each other, despite the fact that both realise each other's strength. Most of the structured networks receive funds from governments and international agencies and have good infrastructure. In contrast to this, loose networks mobilise funds from the public and their member organisations.

Area/region specific networks: The emergence of this type of network is a very recent phenomenon, although regional- state-level federations/associations have existed in some pockets of the country for some time. But after experiencing broad-based national networks such as VANI (Voluntary Action Network India), many regional- and state-level networks were formed by voluntary organisations with similar objectives and structures. This process continues in many parts of the country.

Ideological networks: In India's socio-political arena, certain ideologies play a prominent role, such as Gandhian, Marxist, extreme leftist ideology as taken up by the Naxalities; and religious groups such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians etc. Different ideologies have tried and are still trying their level best

to make voluntary organisations follow them, or to bring them out on a common platform. There was a time when the Gandhian and Christian groups dominated the voluntary sector, but after the Sampurna Kranti movement led by Shri Jai Prakash Narayan and the failure of the Naxalite movement, a large number of them were attracted to the voluntary sector. Later, many of them formed loose networks to coordinate and organise their activities. These types of networks are not so effective in India because their prime objective is alien to voluntarism. Moreover, they promote a certain ideology, which again is against the very spirit of voluntary action.

Funder-led or funder-driven networks: In India, a large number of international funding agencies are actively working and providing financial assistance to voluntary organisations. Some of them have their offices in India with a number of branch offices. In the past, these agencies, and especially those having offices in India, tried to bring their 'partners' onto a common platform to monitor their activities. Likewise, Indian funding agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) also tried to set up nodal agencies to plan, organise, implement, and monitor activities supported by them. These nodal agencies also worked like networks. Experience shows that these types of networks do not last long because voluntary agencies associate themselves with such networks only for financial support. They do not try out any working relationship with them. These types of networks mostly do not like their member organisations to get associated with other funding agencies. Some of them even dictate their terms to the voluntary organisations. It often forces voluntary organisations to ultimately disassociate themselves from them.

Broad-based networks: Broad-based networking emerges out of the realisation that all issues or problems are interrelated and one cannot expect a positive result just by addressing one problem in isolation. VANI is perhaps the only network of this kind, although it does not claim to be so. Being the only such broad-based national network in India, it has members from all regions, states, and ideologies. In the recent past, some of the issue-based national networks also tried to address important issues other then their own, but their constraints such as objectives and structures did not allow them to work on these issues on a sustained basis. But VANI was formed with the objective of addressing all such issues, problems, constraints and so on in a holistic manner. Based on VANI's experience, many broad-based state-level or regional-level networks were also formed in different parts of the country.

Challenges faced by networks

Based on the experience of the existing networks, it was found that many of them face certain dilemmas or challenges that must be addressed collectively for their continued effectiveness. Some commonly identified dilemmas or challenges are as follows.

Participation versus responsibility: Members are always interested in participating in a network to gain news, opinions, or experiences from others; but they generally hesitate to take any responsibility on behalf of the network. Networks should be a collective process where the members' participation and responsibility go hand-in-hand.

Coordination versus control: There is a very fine balance between coordination and control and the network should not attempt to control its members or their activities. By definition, the members of the network remain autonomous and the network should only ensure the promotion of communication between its members or all those who are directly or indirectly associated with it.

Linkages between the individual and the institution: There are two issues related to this dilemma. The first one is the person as an individual member versus being a member of an institution; and secondly linking a person (i.e., a chief executive) to organisational membership versus involving the whole institution as member organisation. Networks have enormous potential to enlist individuals as members based on their interest, commitment, and resources regarding the issues being addressed. But at the same time, the resources to continue an ongoing campaign also require institutional support and therefore both individuals and institutions are equally important. Ideas, experience, and energy is brought to the network by its individual members; but without the support, backing, and commitment of institutions it is not possible to sustain it; therefore it should be the responsibility of member organisations to involve their institution for the furtherance of the network's objectives. This seems lacking in most networks. Similarly secretariat staff should know the member organisation very well including their staff, capacity, resources, and style of functioning, only then will they be able to relate to the institution.

Information versus action: Information is to be shared in order to promote further action. Networks share information with their members or partners with the expectation that members will act upon that information, but generally find that this does not happen. Members expect that all information will be shared with them but hardly take any initiative to act upon the information shared. Similarly, the network secretariat receives a lot of information from its members without having any idea of what to do with such information. If members find that the secretariat is not using their information after a certain period of time for furthering their objectives, they stop sending information to the secretariat and vice-versa.

Focus versus inclusion: Issue-based networks are generally very focused. But the dilemma arises when they attract only those who are interested in that one particular theme, and work in a manner that excludes all the other organisations, who get left out even though they are influential and are effective

in their advocacy efforts. Broad-based networks, on the other hand, have the inherent characteristic of being able to attract a wide spectrum of members and people having varied interests and issues. However, the members of these networks want the network to address their issue on a priority basis and this results in the network addressing dozens of issues simultaneously and in turn losing its focus. 'Focus versus inclusion' is the strategic choice that every network has to make and has to stand by for its overall purpose.

Process versus structure: Networking is a process as well as an activity for achieving certain goals and therefore the focus should be always on that process. It is a fact that the institutionalisation of networks is needed to sustain this process, but the institution should not became heavier than the process, or this will hinder its functioning. The structure should be geared towards facilitating the networking process. Keeping a balance between the process and the structure is a challenge faced by most of the networks.

Working on an issue versus inclusion of new issues: With the changing socioeconomic and political scenario, new challenges are bound to arise, and if networks want to remain relevant for their partners and members, they need to take up new and emerging issues and challenges and work on them. Similarly, old issues which have become important issues for the sector and became integrated into the functioning of large number of member organisations should be dropped from the network agenda, otherwise it will be difficult to concentrate on the new issues and challenges at hand. The staff of the network secretariat need to develop their capacity for new, emerging issues on a regular basis, or look for other avenues to further their interest, capacity, and skill. Management also faces the dilemma of how to retain staff. The turnover of staff (especially professional) is very high in networks.

Static versus rotating leadership: Generally it is found that in some networks, leaders are static because of their personality, acceptability, and linkages – or perhaps there is no space for others. It has been the case that unless a person dies or vanishes from the scene, no leadership change takes place. This results in members losing interest because they never get the opportunity to lead the network. In the rotating leadership form of network, the leadership keeps changing — which bring freshness, innovation, and dynamism to the networking process. In a healthy network, every member should feel that some day they will get the opportunity to lead the network. However, too frequent changes in leadership also create problems, as continuity may be disrupted.

Solidarity versus programmatic action: In a crisis situation, it has been found that members do not have a problem showing solidarity with the affected person or institution. But if in a crisis a network decides to carry out programmatic action in support of that person, institution, or on the issue,

members tend to back out because of the fear of retaliation affecting their own organisation. This is not an affirmative course of action. The dilemma is that in times of crisis every member expects all network members to stand solidly behind them, but when others face a crisis they themselves back out from addressing the issue or extending solidarity.

Roles of broad-based networks

Experience suggests that all broad-based networks should have certain roles, as follows.

Information collection, analysis, and dissemination: Information sharing should be a two-way process. Networks should keep informing their members and others about various developments within and outside the networks, and members have to send regular information to the network for wider dissemination. Timely dissemination of information among the members and across the state is very important. Networks need to work as a data bank with broad information about the sector in that region. Access to the right kind of information has to be developed. Research and analytical capability and writing skills have to be acquired for proper needs-based and relevant documentation. There should also be access to electronic information such as the use of the Internet, email and so on. Networks should make their members aware of the new information technology for speedy and effective information collection and dissemination. There should be more open, clear, and friendly sharing at the state-, inter-state and national levels.

Perspective building: Perspective building on the issues the networks are willing to take up should be carried out among members and others working on that issue. All kinds of options should be invited and a consensus on the issue and its framing should be achieved through debate and discussion. Regular and frequent regional meetings with VOs on the other regional issues need to be organised for perspective building. Analysis of the trends, policies, programmes, and assertive public positions on the issues have to be studied. The issues at hand should be publicised by building programmes on participation in the political process; and its impact, good governance, the need for collective and collaborative actions etc., has to be organised.

Alliance and partnership building: Networks should work towards enhancing interactions between various actors in civil society, such as the corporate and cooperative sectors, the media, donors, the bureaucracy, the intelligentsia, political parties etc., for broad alliance and partnership building. Here it is essential to differentiate between 'partnership' and 'relationship'. Whereas a partnership involves a definite give-and-take process with the partners coming together with a formed objective to achieve in collaboration; a relationship may or may not involve the element of mutual benefit. So in a partnership, either

bilateral or multilateral, the concerned partners have to be convinced about their benefits as a result of the partnership. When making alliances with any of these actors, networks have to look for issues in their areas of interest.

Policy analysis and influencing: Acquiring the skill of policy analysis is a prerequisite for influencing policy at the macro level. Networks need to have information about the different policies concerning their area of interest and involvement. The information has to be analysed in the perspective of the poor, downtrodden, and disadvantaged sections of society. The gap between policy formulation and implementation and alternative suggestions has to be assessed. Organisations continue working at the micro level for years but do not succeed in achieving major success because the policies at the macro level remain the same. Unless these policies are influenced, the desired results cannot be achieved. The network is the representative of the voluntary organisations, and as such, has to make a sustained effort to influence public policies. For this, networks need to have a sound foundation of knowledge in the existing laws and regulations affecting the sector.

Advocacy: Advocacy is a mode of social action to influence those who hold governmental, political, and economic power. It is, "…a tool, based on organised efforts and actions, that use, the instruments of democracy to strengthen democratic processes; such tools include election-related work, lobbying, mass mobilisation, forms of civil disobedience, negotiations and bargaining, and court actions." (David Cohen, AI). Access to information is a prerequisite for any advocacy initiative. Information about public policies – who makes them, how are they made, how to analyse and influence a public policy, how to lobby policy makers to obtain the desired changes – are all areas which lead to effective advocacy work. Knowledge about the laws, rules, and regulations governing the voluntary sector is also important. Networks need to build their capacity in these areas to gain maximum impact.

Capacity building: For effective advocacy, the capacity building of partners and associates, especially of those who are affected or going to be the affected party, is a necessary prerequisite. In the Indian subcontinent, the traditional belief is that people should lead their own affairs and therefore those fighting for their rights should lead the campaign. Voluntary agencies are mere catalysts and their role should be restricted only to educating, sensitising, motivating, and widening the perspectives and building the capacity of the people so that they can fight for their rights themselves. This is called the 'southern perspective' of advocacy. However, in today's fast-changing socioeconomic and political climate, networks risk losing their foresight and becoming irrelevant if they do not continuously build their own and their partners' capacity. Today the capacity building of a network's partners, associates, and members should form an integral part of its programmes and activities.

Interaction with the media: To build a positive image of the voluntary sector in the public at large, it is essential to develop a better understanding of the different types of media and the way they function. A collaborative relationship and regular interaction with the media has to be developed by networks to project the right image of the sector in order to educate, sensitise, and mobilise the public at large and to create public opinion and influence policy makers to achieve the broader objectives of the advocacy effort. The media is a very important element in the development process because of its wide coverage and vast reach. Networks should make optimum and appropriate use of the local and national print media as well as the electronic media as per the demands of the situation. Access to electronic media needs to be enhanced and information has to be disseminated to the media in the desired form.

Membership management: Any network gains its strength from its members. The challenge facing networks is to involve its members in its activities to the maximum extent possible. Often members' involvement remains at the level of participation, limited to attending meetings and seminars, seeking other's experiences, but not sharing one's own. Members need to contribute both energy and resources to sustain a network. There has to be a sense of responsibility among its members towards fulfilling the objectives of the network of which they form a part. As all the members of the network have their own agenda, objectives, issues, and area of operation, they are left with very little time and energy for the network. Networks have to develop a strategy to make their members active and contribute their best, without controlling or interfering in their individual activities. Leadership in a network is often collective, and clashes can occur due to different individuals' different ways of functioning. Networks need to work on strategies for conflict management, for nurturing leadership, and for cadre building.

Alternative funding: Networking is a process, and networks require a procedure to work. Often, due to lack of resources, networks take up a particular project for which funds are available for its sustenance and remain as implementers of that project and thereby become similar to any other organisation. Due to lack of resources, the network fails to maintain its procedures. Therefore alternative funding sources are required, as very few existing donors give funds for networks and networking. Even if some funds are available, the implications of being a funder-driven project cannot be ruled out. So for a network to sustain itself, and to be free from financial uncertainties, it is essential to look for alternative methods of fundraising.

The issues discussed above are some suggestions based on the experience of several voluntary organisations. Finally, an important aspect of networking is its dynamism. A network that is not dynamic ends up becoming an organisation

without much visibility. Also in this regard, it is important to underscore that for a network to be strong and visible, its members must be active in making it so.

The worksheet summarises all the steps and tips presented in this chapter. You can carry out a group exercise using this matrix with the same or a different case study in your training programme.
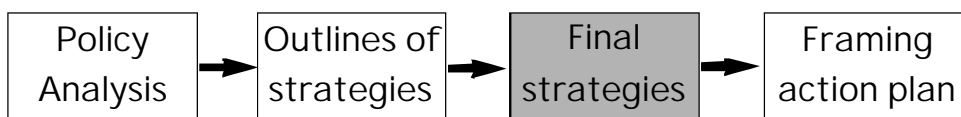
Summary worksheet for outlining an advocacy strategy

Steps	Questions to explore	Your note
1. Selection of policy issue	• Which policy issue is critical to your problem? Which could be your best option? • How many people will gain benefits if you become successful in policy change? Is this a winnable option? • Do you see any opportunity for working together with other organisations? • What is the gravity of the potential risks? Can your organisation effectively advocate on this issue?	
2. Selection of target audience	• Who is the potential target audience? • Who has the authority to make changes and who would be the primary audience? • Who has the greatest influence on decisions? – Secondary audience • Which primary and secondary audience will you select in this issue?	
3. Setting of a policy goal	• What is your policy goal based on the SMART principles of goal setting? • Can you articulate your impact goal? • Can you articulate the effect goal?	
4. Identification of allies	• Who are those who are already working on the issue? Do coalitions exist already or are you going to establish a new coalition? • How can you contribute if others have already started the effort? • What roles do these organisations want you to play in the coalition? • Do others perceive you positively as a 'value-adding' organisation?	
5. Identification of opponents	• Who are the opponents? Are there any organisations or individuals that oppose your proposal of policy change? • Have you listened to the opinions of your opponents? • What can you do to convert your opponents into supporters? • What is a network and networking? What could be the roles and responsibilities of networks and other associated challenges?	

4

Finalising Advocacy Strategies

> This chapter provides important guidelines for finalising advocacy strategies, the third step of the planning framework. Finalising includes the selection of the roles of different stakeholders, as well as determining messages, and activities.

In previous chapters, the focus of all activities has been on the exploration and analysis of realities related to your selected issue. After Chapter 4 these findings, presented in a systematic and logical way, will assist the advocate in formulating actions as advocacy. The following will be the fundamental steps of this chapter (Figure 4.1):

| Policy Analysis | → | Outlines of strategies | → | Final strategies | → | Framing action plan |

Figure 4.1: Final strategy in horizontal framework

Selection of advocacy approaches: There are different ways of advocating for the same issue. Depending upon the time, situation, and resources, you have to select appropriate ways of forwarding your arguments. These ways are known as 'advocacy approaches'.

Identification of key messages: Your advocacy message includes your vision of policy change. The message you want your target audience to hear is the basic question here. The appropriate 'framing' of the issue is an important element of this particular activity.

Defining advocacy activities: Advocacy activities are those which are taken step by step to influence your target audiences. There are several ways of forwarding your key messages to influence them. You have to be able to determine the definite steps here.

Selection of Advocacy Approaches

Your organisation may not be playing a leading role for all the issues selected for advocacy. There may be many other organisations that have more legitimacy for leading the process. If this is the case you have to play a supporting role. In other situations the people who are actually affected by the issue should take the leading role. In this case you can play the role of capacity builder for these people or groups of people. Sometimes it will be necessary for your organisation to take up the issue and influence the policy makers directly. These all depend on the time, situation, and status of your organisation, and the nature of the issue.

When you finalise your roles at the organisational level, you then have to think about the roles that your staff can play at the individual level. Remember that different staff members can play different roles. You have to be able to give appropriate roles to appropriate staff members. The following tips will help you to determine organisational as well as individual roles as you begin your advocacy approach.

Expert informant: Particularly in the mountain regions, it has been noticed that a knowledge gap between policy makers and the people affected is the main problem. The policy makers do have raw information but they do not have independently analysed information. Another reality is that most of the policy makers reside in the plains, and policies are often formulated using the opinions/experiences of these individuals. In this situation, organisations like yours can play the role of expert informant. This is very low risk role and can be played without much upheaval. Many organisations – particularly international organisations – use the term 'technical assistant' for this kind of role. This is actually an advocacy role in terms of policy change. One successful example from Nepal is that many international agencies, including ICIMOD, have played this role to promote community forestry since 1970.
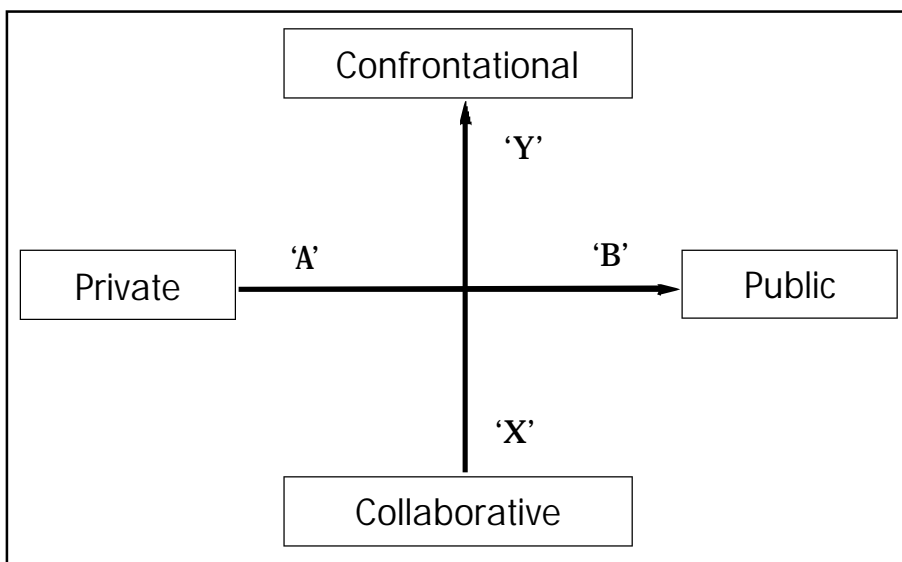
Honest broker: In many areas, the term 'broker' does not have good connotations. Depending upon what is acceptable to those you work with, you can change the term to 'mediator', 'negotiator', etc. The reality, however, is that the person (s) who are playing the advocacy role should be able to work as the link or middleperson between the affected people and policy makers. The prime condition here is the adjective, 'honest', which must be evident in all aspects of interactions and negotiation. This is the main difference between general brokers and brokers as advocates. A people-centred advocate would also make sure that the 'power' that gradually begins to accrue while playing this role does not remain with the individual advocate but is gradually transferred to the affected people themselves so that they can speak for themselves. But until such time as this is possible, an honest broker is needed.

Capacity builder: In the mountain regions, many people know that the rights of the poor are denied. Some of them also know how to claim their rights but they do not have the resources (human, financial, time) to do so. In such situations, organisations like yours can support such groups in filling these gaps. In other cases, people do not even know the provisions in existing laws that could be used to their own benefit. In this case your organisations can raise awareness. However, it must be noted that not every kind of capacity building programme is necessarily advocacy. Only capacity building efforts which keep a conscious relationship with the goal of policy influence can be considered part of the advocacy initiative.

Lobbyist: This is a process of entering into a direct influencing approach with policy makers. The level and gravity of participation in this process depends on your organisational status. For example, if you are an international organisation, it will be more appropriate for you to be involved at the international level as a lobbyist, but if you are a national- or state-level organisation, it will be more relevant for you to lobby with national- or state-level policy makers. To play a successful lobbying role you should have a strong representation of affected people in the form of a coalition or network. You can also form issue-based allies to make your lobbying role more effective.

A proper policy analysis of selected issues helps to determine which approach is appropriate under which circumstances. Much is determined by the political situation in which you are working. Similarly, another determining factor is the relationship that you have maintained with the policy makers of your constituency. If you have a good relationship with policy makers, for example, you can play a very successful lobbying role to in order to achieve the hoped-for changes. If you do not have a very good relationship, you can play the 'expert informant' role. In this latter case, you could use this role to build relationships, because the data you gather and communicate will give you a strong entry point for a discourse with those in power. The following dimensions of advocacy (Figure 4.2) will give you an added insight while selecting your advocacy approaches.

In each of the roles you can adopt a variety of approaches as mentioned in the diagram. When you remain closer to the 'A' and 'X' areas, you do not face much risk and you may not need a strong mass of people behind you. Your advocacy will be very gentle and be carried out within the context of a smooth relationship with your opponents. They may not even perceive you as an advocate on behalf of the oppressed people. However, when you move towards the 'Y' and 'B' areas, you are more at risk and you should have a strong support base behind you to protect yourself and to get the changes made. It is up to you to decide what sort of strategy you want to adopt. You can also remember that other coalition members may remain in different quadrants during the

Figure 4.2: Advocacy approaches

advocacy process for the same issue. This must be kept in mind, and you must proceed accordingly, depending on your organisational limitations and risk-bearing capacity.

It is also important to remember that sometimes a strategy demands that you do not remain with the same approach for a stretch of time. For example, it is always easy to start from an easy and less risky quadrant – the private and collaborative approach to advocacy. If you are not able to produce any results using this approach, you should move towards public and confrontational approaches. On the other hand, you can initiate a strategy by which some of your coalition members always remain with the private approach while others move towards a public approach so that you are able to exert pressure from both ends. Table 4.1 shows the different roles the coalition members can play.

You can play a variety of roles while working on one and the same issue. This also means that it is necessary to be very particular when selecting an appropriate person from within the organisation for a specific role. For example, a good lobbyist cannot be a good capacity builder.

Expert informant role: a case from Uttaranchal, India

Uttaranchal is representative of the conditions prevalent in the Western Himalayas. The people in the region are mainly farmers, practicing subsistence agriculture. A distinct feature of this type of agriculture is that despite the otherwise apparent poverty, it provided food security to the people and virtually no family went to bed hungry. This was because traditional agriculture was based on the principles which promoted diversity and rested on maintaining a fine balance between water, soil, air, animals, and plants.

Table 4.1: Examples of advocacy roles

Target audience	Possible roles
Minister of mining	The ministry does not know the physical condition of labourers working in coal mining areas. It is important to give them analytical information about labour, wages, physical living conditions, and their basic human rights. **– Expert informant role**
Ministry of labour and housing	The ministry does have information about labourers in coal mining areas but it does not have analytical information about their seasonal migration patterns and about foreign labourers working in coal mining. **– Expert informant role**
Business leaders of coal mining areas	These people are always looking for profit but do not have enough information about basic human rights determined by the constitution and international conventions. Hence they could suffer in the international market if they contravene these laws **– Capacity builder role** Sometimes, labourers do bargain to get appropriate wages and other facilities but they often fail to get their demands fulfilled. **– Honest broker role**
Non-government organisations working with mining labours	These organisations often pay attention only to the immediate relief of the labourers but are often out of touch with the root causes. **– Capacity builder role**
Local representatives	Local representatives of the area are manipulated by business leaders. They use labourers as a vote bank but do not play any role in protecting their basic human rights. **– Lobbyist role**

However, today the scenario is different. Agriculture in the mountains has been subjected to unsustainable changes through the introduction of the principles and practices of the 'Green Revolution'. These procedures were actually conceived for water sufficient areas in the plains and hence were alien and unsuitable for the largely rainfed Himalayan slopes here. The excessive stress on hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers and pesticides, monoculture, and cash crops has led to a fall in yields and in the quality of food; has rendered crops vulnerable to new diseases and failure; and has impoverished the land. By uprooting the safety valves that traditional agriculture allowed, the new agriculture has greatly undermined people's food security, self-reliance, and resilience and has had a negative social effect as well. It has broken up the people's inter-dependence and spirit of sharing, and engineered migration and an exodus from the villages.

Against this background, Beej Bachao Andolan (Save the Seeds Movement) in Tehri Garhwal has bravely stood up against the challenge posed by the new agriculture and its promoters, and given a voice to farmers' personal angst and

public despair. It will not be an exaggeration to say that in the post-Chipko period, it is one of the most original struggles in the Uttarakhand hills, which has brought the malaise and issues of the farming system and farmers' rights to its current prominence in the region.

Today there is a growing awareness and acceptance of the need to conserve biodiversity, preserve indigenous knowledge systems, and to stress the farmers' right to self-determination. But when the Beej Bachao Andolan started almost two decades ago, it was a bold, visionary decision based on deep conviction, and was a movement that seemed to be swimming against the current, because the technology of Green Revolution at the time wore the halo of being a universal panacea.

Questions for discussion
- Do you see any possibility for advocates to play the role of expert informant in this case? If you do, indicate a maximum of three options.
- What other advocacy roles can advocates play here?
- Can you suggest some collaborating agencies for advocacy?

Identification of Key Messages

There are three basic elements in a key message: (a) what it is that your target audience is being asked to do; (b) what the rationale is for doing so; and (c), what the positive impacts are of doing so. In today's fast-paced world, people often do not have enough time to listen to the history of an issue. Similarly, they do not have time to read a long application or petition. Advocates should design the message so that the argument can be transmitted in a precise but clear way. However, you must not lose the basic elements you need to include in the name of making the message short. The following tips will help you design such an advocacy message.

During your strategic planning, you can finalise the key messages for your advocacy mission. When you secure funding and exposure to the media, you can develop your message in different forms. However, you should always prepare a back up method of communication method. For example, if one form of communication does not work, you should be able to deliver another form of the message containing the same elements immediately.

Your message always depends upon the approach you choose. For example, if you choose the private approach to advocacy, the form your message takes would be different. A diary note, some written points, or a simple memorandum would be enough. If you choose the confrontational approach to advocacy, the form of your message would be different. Your key message should be reflected in militant slogans, banners, etc. If you choose the public approach, your

message should be reflected in the form of articles, news items, radio/ television interviews and so on. If you choose the collaborative approach, your key message should be reflected in presentations, study reports, seminars, and training programmes. This does not mean that you should use the prepared message all the time. You can make on-the-spot changes as well, but be sure that you have not lost the main point of the message.

While working on the same issue, you will often have different target audiences. Within the primary audience, you will have several individuals having different responsibilities. Based on their responsibilities and interests, you should be able to craft the key message. Look at the example of a key message in Table 4.2.

Defining Advocacy Activities

The main activity of advocacy is making your target audiences listen to your logical arguments on a selected issue. Therefore, in one sense the entire range of advocacy activities is nothing more than ways of effective message delivery. Some literature has also used the term 'advocacy tactics' for advocacy activities. Advocacy activities depend primarily upon the advocacy approach that you have selected. The following example (Table 4.3) will help you to understand this.

This worksheet summarises all the steps and tips presented in this chapter. You can have a group exercise on the basis of this matrix using the same or a different case study in your training programme.

Table 4.2: An example of a key message

Overall message	The recently introduced 40% tax on community forestry user groups has to be removed.
Target audience	Key message
Minister of Forests	Introduction of this tax on community forestry user groups is not within the framework of decentralised local governance that is accepted by the constitution of Nepal. User group members have also invested their time and energy to earn this fund and they are well committed to utilising the fund for local development. Local development is the main thrust of the country. Therefore, this tax has to be removed.
Minister of Finance	If you have funds available at the local level, you would not have to allocate funds for local development. The question is whether we want that fund to first come to the centre and then be sent back to village again or whether it is better to keep the money in the village itself. Ultimately, this fund will be spent on local development.
Political leaders	This tax intends to start an anti-decentralisation process in development. It also discourages local institutions from taking responsibility for local development. This process will encourage even more centralisation in future. Therefore, it is also a matter of your political credibility at the local level. People will be closely observing you whether you support the process of centralisation or decentralisation.
Business leaders (Those with business interests in forests)	You need to change your previous style of business. You may not be able to keep bureaucrats happy and they may not do your work quickly. Letting this funding remain at the local level will not disturb your business at all.
Local representatives	If you are not supporting the removal of this tax from the community forest user groups, such a removal of this tax will be impossible because you are primarily responsible for local development. If you manage to retain this fund at the local level, you are the one who will have higher credibility in the arena of local development. Ultimately, you are the one who is responsible for fulfilling the demands of the people. If this imposition reduces funds at the local level, it will affect your political mission too.

Table 4.3: An example of advocacy activities

Alternative advocacy approaches	Possible advocacy activities
Private approach	• Select all information, analyse, and have enough data • Identify, meet, and build rapport with key personal assistants of the minister • Getting appointment with minister of mining and meeting for rapport building • Inviting minister of mining to a formal reception in connection with some other programme and build rapport • Briefing minister about labour settlement problem in Koilapahad • Providing details of the issue as demanded by the minister • Similarly, meetings, briefings, and providing detailed information to all other target audiences
Public approach	• Invite minister to a public gathering, honour him/her, and ask him to speak about the issue • Brief him/her about all problems and expected policy changes through your speech and presentations in public gatherings • Publish several news articles about the issue from leading newspapers at the local and state level • Meet minister with a delegation of people from the affected area • Give television/ radio interviews about the issue • Gather several intellectuals and organise paper presentations about the issue and possible options for solutions • Publish newsletters, reports, and other publications about the issue • Publish posters and arrange displays in public places • Similar activities can be carried out for all of your target audiences
Collaborative approach	• Identify interests of the ministry and plan joint work • Plan joint research and identify solutions to the problems • Prepare a joint action plan and implement • Carry out capacity building programmes for different levels
Confrontational approach	• Organise rallies, demonstrations, public gatherings, different types of strikes • Participate in dharnas (sit-ins), gheraos (surrounding someone), paintings, posters, hunger strikes, and so on • Organise 'hunger strike to the death' as a last step

Summary worksheet for finalisation of strategy

Steps	Questions to explore	Your note
1. Selection of advocacy approach	• What is the best approach for influencing your audience, both primary and secondary? • Do you have a good relationship with policy makers and can you use such a relationship in your advocacy process? • What style of advocacy do you like to follow – private, public, collaborative, or confrontational – or a combination of these? • Do you lead yourself or do you support others in leading the process? • Do you have enough capacity to play different roles – lobbyist, broker, expert informant, etc.? • Do you use the media in your advocacy?	
2. Identification of key message	• What do you want your target audience to hear? • What policy changes do you want and what support do you expect from other people? • What are the possible options you have identified? Are you open to different options? • Can you convey these options to your audiences?	
3. Defining advocacy activities	• What are steps you will follow to deliver your key message? • What other activities do you need to follow to get policy change? • What could be the best options for delivering your message to your target audience? • What media do you use to deliver your message?	

5

Framing the Advocacy Action Plan

> This chapter provides guidelines for the preparation of an actual advocacy action plan, the last step of the advocacy planning framework. This plan includes setting a timeline, the preparation of a budget and the preparation of monitoring and evaluation methods for advocacy initiatives (see Figure 5.1).

This chapter includes the following sub-components.

Setting a timeline: This is a simple timeframe of various activities, as in any other activity planning.

Preparation of budget: This also follows the usual process of budgeting for the activities that you want to carry out during your advocacy initiative.

Using a planning tool: To make your advocacy mission even more systematic, you can use a planning tool such as the logframe.

Planning for monitoring and evaluation: As is usual in other programmes, you must monitor and evaluate advocacy initiatives. You need to work on setting this up during the planning process itself if you are to achieve systematic monitoring.

Policy Analysis	→	Outlines of strategies	→	Final strategies	→	Framing action plan

Figure 5.1: Last part of horizontal framework

Setting a Timeline

The previous chapter showed the planning of nearly the whole advocacy strategy. However, it is natural that a plan of any activity needs a timeline and an advocacy plan is no different. However, an advocacy plan needs more flexibility than other service delivery types of programme because many things in an advocacy initiative are not under the control of the advocates. For example, the political climate and the target audience can change without warning. In this case, advocates need to be willing to change over time and also to re-direct their advocacy strategies at short notice.

Similarly, it is very unpredictable when valuable opportunities for influencing the identified target audience may suddenly appear. Advocates should be able to capitalise on these opportunities. In some cases, a policy change planned for five years' time may be achieved within a year. In contrast, after the target audience changes, you may encounter unexpected opposition and the advocacy process may have to be started from the beginning again. In particular, pay attention to the following points.

- The policy environment is not within the control of advocacy groups. It can change very quickly. Be flexible in order to capitalise on the changed environment.
- There may be unexpected but important opportunities for influencing policy makers in favour of your advocacy mission. Be ready to capitalise on such opportunities.
- Unexpected events may occur in advocacy. Allocate some extra time for such events.
- If you accomplish your mission earlier than the planned time, you will be regarded as even more successful. Your planning should be conservative but your thinking should be innovative.

Preparation of Budget

It is also usual to prepare a budget for an advocacy project. However, it is difficult to estimate the cost of an advocacy initiative in advance because you should be always open to inserting new activities, and this involves additional expenditure. This is the main difference between an advocacy budget and the budget planned for a normal service delivery type of programme.

For example, if your target audience suddenly shows an interest in visiting the affected groups of people, you should be able to bring them because it may be a good opportunity for you to influence them in favour of your proposed policy change. This kind of interest cannot be planned and budgeted for properly. Furthermore the cost of advocacy activities depends what type of strategy you want to take up. For example, if you organise a press conference in a big hotel,

it may cost a lot. The same conference can be organised in a school building, which may be available almost free of cost. You have to ask yourself which would be more effective from a cost-benefit point of view.

For activities like policy research, policy analysis, designing advocacy messages, preparation of documentary films, and so on, one may choose to hire professionals from outside. If you follow this approach, your advocacy activities will be much more expensive. If, however, you have in-house capacity to take up all these activities, it will be less expensive. Therefore, you have to prepare the budget using with enough flexibility and using at least the following headings.

- Overheads – staff cost, supplies, fees, office space, office equipment, communication, travel, other overheads, etc.
- Advocacy activities – meetings, seminars, demonstrations, street plays, etc.
- Capacity building for advocacy – internal and external capacity building, etc.
- Consulting services – research, and others
- Expenses for unexpected activities

To meet those expenses, you can look for interested donors to fund you. Remember that you should be selective about getting funding from donors for advocacy initiatives – to make sure they do not later pressurise you to go in a different direction from that which you and the affected people want to go. You need a separate discussion on how to get funding for advocacy.

Preparation of a Logical Plan of Action

To make your advocacy plan more systematic, it is important to follow a planning tool so that all elements of your plan are reflected in a logical order. Some organisations use a tool known as logical framework (logframe) as a planning tool. If your organisation is familiar with this tool, you can use it for advocacy planning as well. If your organisation is using a different tool for your normal planning, you can use the same tool for your advocacy planning.

Whatever tool you use, you should be able to show the links between the goal, objectives, inputs, outputs, effects, and impacts in your planning document. Based on these reflections, you can make a plan for the monitoring and evaluation of your advocacy initiative.

Setting Strategies for Monitoring Progress

It is obvious that all advocacy activities are not visible and measurable in a quantitative manner as in other normal programmes. For example, lobbying based on the private approach cannot be seen publicly. Similarly, some advocates playing the role of honest brokers often strategically choose to be invisible. However, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy initiatives are even

more important than in other programmes, since without such a system in place one could be actually going nowhere while convincing oneself that one is actually doing something useful. Therefore, a monitoring plan has to be prepared very carefully and tactfully.

Some of the distinctions between 'monitoring' and 'evaluation', which were also discussed during the Regional Training of Trainers in Advocacy programme in March 2004, are given in Table 5.1[2].
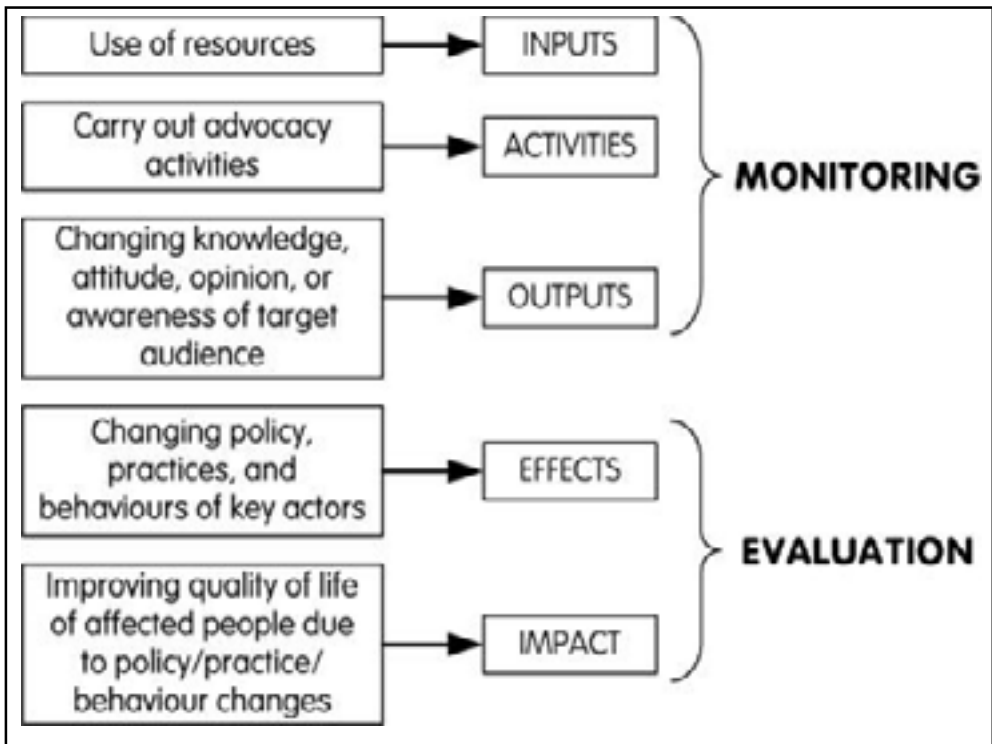
Table 5.1: Differences between monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring	Evaluation
Monitoring focuses on the activities, and whether these activities are leading to the objectives identified earlier.	Evaluation focuses on whether the overall outreach is moving towards the vision and goals of the organisation, the goals and objectives of the proposal/plan on the basis of which the outreach was started/funded.
Monitoring is carried out during the programme functioning.	Evaluation is carried out 'post-activity' (sometimes mid-term, sometimes at the end of the funding cycle etc.)
Monitoring focuses on 'efficiency' (whether the resources are being used optimally).	Evaluation focuses on 'effectivity' (whether the outreach has really changed the situation in the desired direction).
Usually monitoring is carried out using internal human resources.	Usually evaluation is carried out using external human resources, supported by internal human logistical support.

You should follow the same framework for the monitoring and evaluation of advocacy as used for other programmes (Figure 5.2).

It is necessary to bear in mind that the monitoring and evaluation of any programme is a difficult and complex task. The monitoring and evaluation of an advocacy initiative is even more difficult and complex. For example, you cannot claim that the behaviour change of some people is only due to your advocacy activities. There may be several such influential factors ongoing in society that has helped to change behaviour. Similarly, you may get policy change as expected by your advocacy mission but this may not necessarily result in immediate changes in people's lives. Some changes may come after several years of policy enactment. Monitoring and evaluation is a complex process. Please pay attention to the following points while preparing a monitoring and evaluation plan for your advocacy initiative.

---

[2] This section is adopted from the notes of Josantony Joseph

Figure 5.2: Areas for monitoring and evaluation

- Do not be impatient to see the positive impact of advocacy in the first year after policy change. Be passionate and flexible enough to judge the impact several years after your advocacy initiative has finished.
- Do not expect that all the credit for getting positive changes will come to you or your organisation. Remember that advocacy is done collectively, joining with many others like yours. You should also not undermine the contributions of invisible actors. Your status will be one of 'contributor'.
- Focus more on the process rather than on the product. The process you take up is under your control but the product is not within your control. Believe that a good process produces a good product.
- Compare the process of advocacy in one context to another. This will give you useful insights for improving your advocacy strategy.
- Remember that you should revise your advocacy plan more frequently than other normal programmes. Information coming from your monitoring reports will help get revision done.
- You can count policy changes but you cannot count the improvements brought by advocacy in policy enforcement. Therefore, do not expect to be able to quantify everything in advocacy.
- Changes in behaviour are even more difficult to measure. Be passionate and investigate the degree of change in qualitative terms.

- It is good to gather lessons from evaluation rather than products in the form of quality of life.
- It is not necessary that all advocacy missions have the success they intended. Therefore, be open to receive and acknowledge the failure lessons of advocacy, which will be very useful for you when revising your ongoing advocacy strategies and future planning.
- Make your funding agencies clear about what kind of work this advocacy work is. If your donors want a definite result at any cost, discuss this with them in the beginning. If you do not discuss during the planning stage, you will have a problem at the end.

The worksheet summarises all the steps and tips presented in this chapter. However, you should not limit yourself to these questions. You will find many other questions come up during your discussion. Please add these questions later on. You can have a group exercise on this matrix using a particular case study in your training programme.

Summary worksheet for framing an action plan

Steps	Questions to explore	Your note
1. Setting a timeline	• How long will it take to achieve your advocacy goal? • How flexible are you regarding your timeline? • Is the situation such that you are likely to achieve your goal in a timely fashion? • What will be the alternative approaches of advocacy if the situation changes?	
2. preparation of budget	• What are your funding sources? Are donors interested in supporting you? What donors should you select for your advocacy initiative? • What level of profile should you choose for your advocacy activities? Do you prefer to remain 'high profile'? • Do you have in-house capacity for all the work that you have planned? • Are you hiring consultants for some of your work? • What is the level of your flexibility in budgeting? Are you able to revise your budget frequently?	
3. Using a planning tool	• What planning tool are you going to use for your advocacy plan? • Are you familiar with the tool selected? • Do you see any advantages in using this tool for advocacy planning? If yes, what are they?	
4. Monitoring and evaluation plan	• Did you think about a monitoring and evaluation plan for advocacy? • Did you understand the differences between the monitoring of advocacy initiatives and other normal programmes? • Do you have clarity on focus areas of evaluation of advocacy?	

6

Implementation of the Advocacy Plan

Advocacy is all about influencing decision makers in order to obtain changes in policies and practices. When well-planned strategies are in place, advocates should start applying different approaches to start the influencing process. At this stage, advocates should take various decisions based on the chosen strategies.

Action-oriented decisions are taken based on (a) pre-defined strategies, (b) the political environment, and (c) organisational capabilities. However, there are several helpful tips for taking such decisions effectively. This chapter focuses more on such practical tips collected from different cases.

While implementing advocacy initiatives, there are three operational strategies that advocates should pay attention to. These are as follows.

Communication strategies: The basic context of any background to an advocacy initiative is that one party is demanding rights and another party is denying these either directly or by implication/practice. An advocacy initiative takes place between these two conflicting interests. Communication therefore plays a vital role in forwarding the interests of either party using different communication media.

Strategies for a collective effort: Advocacy can be carried out within a family to ensure the basic rights of all family members. Even in this case, the deprived members of the family must stand together. Advocacy for the public interest is broader than the issues observed within a family and covers decisions that ensure the rights of deprived members of the community in public affairs. A collective effort is part of the spirit of advocacy at all levels.

Tactical strategies: Advocacy is the struggle to get expected changes from other people. It is also natural that all struggles can be sustained only when there is some hope of winning in some area even if the overall struggle is difficult. Advocates should be prompt to apply the appropriate tactics, as and when required, to maximise their chances of winning in different areas. Therefore, advocates at this stage of the initiative should always be ready to take decisions with regard to tactics.

Communication Strategies

There are basically three elements in communication for advocacy: (a) the message should be designed properly; (b) the message delivery should be carried out in a professional manner; and (c) the follow up should be carried out appropriately. If one element is missing or is weak, it can affect the achievements of the whole advocacy mission. Therefore, the following references could be helpful for advocates to make these elements stronger.

Designing a message

An advocacy message should be able to capture (a) a short background of your proposed changes – i.e., why you are raising this issue; (b) at least two options for expected change; and (c) the consequences of not making the proposed changes. Finally, advocates should be able to convince others why the options forwarded through the advocacy initiative are the most suitable.

Often, good and bad messages depend upon the interest of the target audience. However, the literature on this suggests that the initial message should be very concise but clear. If the concerned person wants more details, it is more effective to supply these later on. For this kind of message design, advocates must know the interest of the target audience so that the message can fit. For a big issue and a senior target audience, advocates should carry out a small research project to identify the interest of the target audience. Secondly, advocates should not use jargon and unnecessary elaboration in such messages. It is always good to keep the advocacy message simple, clear, and short (S-3). The following questions will help you when designing your advocacy message. Advocates need not answer all questions on a formal notepad. However, these questions will work as an eye-opener.

- What group of people does your audience, both primary and secondary, represent?
- What biases do they have because of their educational or professional background?
- Have they clarified their position or stand already on this issue?
- Is it possible to link the present issue with their interest?
- Do you think that there is some misunderstanding on the part of the audience about this issue?

- What information about the issue do they already have?
- What new information are you offering to them now?
- Do you know what they do outside their work – hobbies and so on – which could be used to make your message more appealing to them?

If you do not know all about your target audience as indicated by the above questions, you can follow very informal ways of gathering such information. You can mobilise your colleagues within and outside your organisation very informally and tactfully so that your audiences do not feel that you are carrying out research about them.

Finally, your message should be understandable from your audience's perspective. All the words, phrases, and expressions you use must be from fields familiar to your audience. To ensure that your message is clear, test your message with those who are not familiar with your job.

Delivery of advocacy messages

Messages can be designed and tested collectively in a team. It is acceptable to send this message by the distance media of delivery – post, newspapers, email etc. But if you send someone to meet and hand over the message, it is more effective as well as more challenging. Your challenge here is to identify such a person who could influence the target audience through their credibility even as they deliver the message.

Therefore, advocates should select the best one or two persons to deliver the message effectively. Apart from the designed message, the selected persons should also be able to insert additional information about the issue. If they say something contrary to your message, it affects the whole advocacy mission.

Follow up of messages: The general expectation of message delivery by a reliable medium is getting a response on the issues and options provided in the message. This is the ideal. The general tendency is that you have to follow it up if it is of interest of you. At the same time, your target audience should not feel that you are pressurising them so much that they do not have time to think. Therefore, you have to follow a middle path for effective follow-up of the message. The following tips will help you.

Resend the message: If you have delivered the message by electronic media and you have not received any response for a length of time, you could re-send the message asking tactfully for an acknowledgement

Writing a follow-up letter: Write a gentle reminder if you do not get any reaction within your expected or negotiated time range.

Using the meeting for another purpose: If you meet the person by chance in between for another purpose, remind them gently of your conversation. However, you should not react if you get a negative response during this kind of meeting. Take the response positively and request another meeting regarding the issue.

Courtesy call: Depending upon the status of your target group, you can think about making a courtesy call at some time. You need not enter directly into the topic of your issue in this type of conversation but you should create such an environment that the person can say something about your previous message.

Invitation for another purpose: If you organise a programmes on other matters, perhaps different to the advocacy issue, you can invite the concerned person. If they agree to participate, you will have a follow up conversation. Acceptance of your agreement itself will be a positive response of your target audience.

There are various ways of reinforcing a message to your target audience. It is very hard to determine which might be effective in which context. The most reinforcing ways are situational. A tactful advocate should be able to catch whatever opportunity arises for message follow up. However, remember that too much follow up for the same message to the same person sometimes produces negative effects. Following the middle path for follow up is convincing to average target audiences.

Media Strategies

The media is another means of communication, and includes newspapers, television, radio, banners, posters, billboards, video, badges, notices, newsletters, etc. From a transformation point of view, the media can be categorised into two groups: (a) electronic, and (b) printed. From a design point of view, the media can be divided into four groups: (a) formal, (b) informal, (c) written, and (d) verbal. Newspapers, television, and radio are commonly called mass media, as large numbers of people are targeted in the communication. The mass media forms the central attention for advocacy initiatives.

Ownership and control of the media

The media is regarded as the fourth organ of the state and from this point of view is seen as equal to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government in a democratic society. There are various mechanisms for checks and balances among these organs. But in reality it is not exactly like this. In liberal democratic countries, most mass media houses are owned by businesses. In autocratic countries, the government often owns and controls large elements of the mass media. In extreme cases, governments detain journalists and editors and shut the mass media if they are too critical of the programmes and plans introduced by the government.

Most media claim to be unbiased and independent, and say they publish stories of opposing sides independently. Some newspapers have political allegiances, however. In countries with a multiparty system, political parties sometimes indirectly own or control certain parts of the media based on their own political ideology and party interests. These media can then play a vital role during elections by promoting the side they favour.

Thus, ownership and control over the media varies from country to country. What is important for an advocacy initiative is to understand the dynamics of the ownership and control of the mass media. You need to be aware of which approaches the media prefer on the issue you are dealing with. Without understanding these aspects properly, your media strategy can even produce negative results. The following tips will help advocacy groups to formulate effective media strategies.

- Map out what media exist in the country, province, or region that your organisation should be aware of. This includes newspapers (daily, weekly, journals), television stations, radio stations, etc.
- Identify who owns what, to what degree, and the focus of each of these media.
- Understand their hidden agenda – their ideological or party allegiances.
- Identify which is the most appropriate to your organisation and the issue that you are dealing with.

The media is powerful. It influences public opinion in a short space of time and to a degree that no one can imagine. Keep this reality in mind and carry out careful homework to develop a proper strategy.

Common interest of journalists

While you clearly need the media to send messages to your target audience, people working within the media also look for individuals or groups like yours as a source of information that could be exciting for the public. However, these two needs and interests do not always coincide. Advocacy initiators should work out what interests they have in common with those in the media. The following tips are designed to be helpful.

- Media people want news items from you. If you cannot offer them a specific news item, they may not be interested in listening to you.
- News collectors are eager to highlight critical issues in order to catch the attention of the public. If you offer only generic history about an issue, this is generally useless from a media perspective.
- They always like to capture burning issues and related crises. If your issue is too simple and common, no one will pay attention to it.

- Media people like to examine your organisation's critical viewpoints rather than simply learning what happened.

- They want to dig out the expert opinion of you or your organisation about the issue you are dealing with. If you cannot offer much expertise on the issue, they may use their own judgement, which may not be in your favour.

- Journalists are always interested in highlighting crises of all types. If you are facing an internal crisis like scandal, corruption, or favouritism they will not forgive you. This situation could be very harmful for you and your organisation.

Possible backfire from the media

Some people tend to have negative stereotypes about the media and journalists. Such a perception does not support an advocacy initiative. Therefore, begin your media strategy with a positive and constructive perception towards the media. Some considerations are as follows.

- A small weakness in your preparation for using the media can harm your organisation. You must be able to protect your organisation from any harmful consequences from the use of the media.

- Journalists are well trained in discovering a message from your level of confidence. Lack of confidence generally indicates either that you are not well prepared to deal with the issue or that you are hiding something. In this situation, journalists could make various assumptions, which could be contrary to your interests.

- In many cases, senior journalists use unprofessional workers for news collection. Do not expect ethically grounded journalism from these people. Something small you have overlooked can be noted and reported to their senior reporters. Therefore, you have to be very careful about what level of journalists you are talking to. This is a major challenge when dealing with media people.

- Politeness in dealing with journalists and passion in responding is the best policy. Journalists can ask you harassing questions, but you should not react negatively.

The above experiences reflect the challenges of those who want to use the media as a means of advocacy. Some of the challenges are under the control of advocates (advocacy groups) whereas some of these are beyond their control. The media houses themselves have created some of these challenges. The magnitude of these challenges are different from place to place and are mostly contextual. Therefore, a two-way effort (from advocates and also from media houses) is essential to minimise these challenges.

Role of the Media in Advocacy: Experience from India[3]

It is increasingly being realised that behind the glitter of modern development there is a lot of injustice. Many oppressed groups of our society face injustice (on the basis of caste, gender, race, class); future generations face injustice (mainly in the form of environmental destruction) and other forms of life also face injustice (in the form of cruelty and the destruction of their habitats).

Although the threats caused such injustice are increasing, there are also many groups of concerned people as well as individuals working hard to fight these injustices. People suffering under injustice also try to fight, and they are not alone. There are several people (or groups of people) who they may have never met but who are working in their own way to stop these injustices. There are groups with various levels of specialised knowledge and expertise in resisting particular forms of injustice, and there are others who come forward in a more spontaneous way to help a just cause. Apart from resisting specific cases of injustice, there is also a much wider effort to create a more just society where the possibility for injustice, and various forms of violence rooted in injustice, will be greatly reduced.

These efforts at various levels try to approach the government, leading national and international institutions, legislative bodies, courts of law, the media, and other influential forums with the aim of influencing their decisions, policies, and programmes. The aim is to try to ensure the withdrawal of (existing or proposed) unjust decisions/policies and the adoption of just decisions/policies. This can also be called 'public interest advocacy', or for the sake of brevity, just advocacy.

The media plays an important role in advocacy initiatives for various just causes and for creating a more just world. First of all, media in the form of newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and others enables us to reach millions of people in a short time, something which is not otherwise possible. Secondly, an issue that is being highlighted in the media also has a greater chances of receiving the due attention of other influential actors including legislative bodies, ministers, senior officials, leading institutions, courts of law and so on.

It is therefore crucial that advocacy efforts obtain the support and involvement of the media. Fortunately, fairly often a small section of the media is willing to be very supportive and is sometimes willing to be considered part of the advocacy effort. There are some 'alternative' media outlets which give the greatest importance to these efforts for a just world. In addition, there are some

---

[3] This article was written by Bharat Dogra, who presented it in the Training of Trainers Workshop, 29 June to 4 July 2004, Kathmandu

highly concerned persons within the mainstream media who take a special interest in contributing to and helping public advocacy efforts. Advocacy efforts should make it a priority to identify these sources of special support, to make available all relevant information on a regular basis to them, and above all to establish a stable, enduring relationship.

However this is likely to provide only some access to media coverage, and any large advocacy effort should strive to reach the much larger world of mainstream media to try to ensure bigger and better coverage of the issue and ideas advocated by it.

As any good manual on media advocacy will readily tell us, the specific demands and needs of an advocacy effort should be linked to the choice of the media form (printed or electronic, traditional or modern and so on). Similarly, the immediate need of a particular time or crisis situation will decide whether the print/electronic media should be approached in the form of a press release, or by calling a press conference, by organising a press tour, or writing a series of letters to editors. There are important norms which generally govern these various forms of media advocacy. It is important for anyone leading or playing an active role in any such effort to be aware of these norms to avoid making mistakes and ensure the best possible result from limited resources.

Unlike corporate groups, public interest advocacy groups do not have adequate funds to place advertisements in the mainstream media. In special circumstances perhaps they can mobilise the resources for limited advertising space, but generally this choice is not available to them. What is more, advertisements are often not the best way of drawing attention to issues of public interest, including some very controversial issues. Readability and credibility are both higher when journalists, editors, and media persons take up these issues on their own. This is why it is important for advocacy groups to have a very creative and constructive relationship with the media. The greatest source of strength is that the media recognises their integrity and honesty, and their sincerity with regard to the ideas and issues being advocated by them.

Such recognition is the biggest long-term source of strength for any advocacy group. The second biggest source of strength is the accuracy of their facts. If the media has faith in the sincerity of the advocacy group as well as in the accuracy of the facts provided by them, the chance that the advocacy group will receive adequate coverage is much higher.

Sometimes, an advocacy group makes the mistake of highlighting itself more than the issues advocated by them. Sometimes not even a group but a single person is highlighted. This can be easily counter-productive. The greater the concern for the wider issues related to the welfare of humanity (and other forms

of life), the greater the likelihood of the media seeing this as a sincere advocacy effort.

However, some advocacy groups complain that despite all their sincerity and hard work they still do not get adequate coverage in the media even though the issues raised by them are important. Some have even worse experiences. They complain that sections of the media are giving space to malicious propaganda against them instigated by powerful vested interests.

This is part of a larger crisis within the media which is seen by many concerned media persons themselves to be moving increasingly away from the most important concerns of humanity while over-emphasising frivolous issues, scandals, and glamour. In addition there is an increasing stranglehold of big-money interests over huge media empires and these are not interested in issues relating to economic inequalities and social injustice. As overall media concerns increasingly move away from what is needed by a just and sustainable world, the space available for public advocacy groups is also likely to decrease.

So while it is important for individual advocacy groups to try to obtain better coverage for their issues in the media, it is also important to initiate wider efforts to reform the media to make it more receptive to issues of survival, hunger, poverty, and justice. Without compromising the impartiality and freedom of the media in any way, these efforts should include positive incentives for the creative use of the media to contribute to a just world, while also including disincentives for those who habitually misuse the media for unethical purposes.

Efforts to improve the media coverage of issues relating to the creation of a just world should include improvements in the advocacy efforts as well as wider efforts to initiate some long-overdue reforms in the media. Encouragement to public-spirited editors and journalists to promote media initiatives devoted to the creation of a just world can also play a very helpful role.

Coalition Strategies

A coalition is a group of individuals or organisations working for the same purpose. The term 'ally' carries the same meaning in advocacy. Other literature speaks of 'like-minded organisations' that have a common agenda on a certain issue. It is not necessary to have the same purpose for everything. A coalition can be formed among those individuals and organisations who share at least one common purpose. In advocacy, the policy goal can be the common factor.

A coalition can vary in size and in many other ways. It can be big or small, formal or informal, homogeneous or heterogeneous, and so on. The coalition approach has both advantages and disadvantages.

The importance of coalitions

Stronger and larger voice: Advocacy is often carried out to achieve changes in policies, and requires wide coverage in society. For example, if an initiative succeeds in changing the government reservation policy for tribal groups, this covers tribal communities living throughout the country. An issue that has large coverage requires a larger voice. This does not only mean shouting loudly. It means different people from different corners raising their voices together. This cannot be done through a single organisation alone.

Influential voice: In advocacy, your target audience does not listen to a general voice. The voice you raise must be influential so that the target audience is compelled to listen. A number of organisations and individuals joining forces to raise a collective voice is the power of advocacy, which makes the target audience sit up and take notice.

Coordinated efforts: Advocacy is required when one group is demanding and another group is resisting certain changes. The resisting group here called the target audience. The target audience also observes the dynamics of the society very closely. If they hear different messages from different groups or individuals, they think that action is not required or that it is premature to start making changes. But if they hear the same version from different corners, they are compelled to think twice about their resistance. Therefore, a coalition makes a coordinated argument.

Creating visibility: In the present day, society is full of debate, discussion, and arguments. Responsive listeners must be selective according to their own specific criteria. Therefore, advocates must think about the ways and means of making their issue visible to all concerned individuals and institutions. The media is the best way to make the issue visible in a short time and at minimum cost.

Mutual protection: The resisting group will also be active in protecting their interests. Advocates can carry out a social survey of opinion formally or informally to determine whether their resistance to change is still valid or not. In this process, they can also play different games to harass advocacy groups. If one organisation or only a limited number of individuals speak out, they can be harassed easily. If many organisations and individuals work together, such harassment is not possible.

Challenges of coalitions

No concept or approach is free of problems. The approach of working in coalitions for advocacy initiatives certainly has its disadvantages. However, we, who are raising our voices for those who face injustice, should take these problems as challenges.

Differences in commonality: Generally, coalition members come from different contexts and backgrounds. There may be similarities on one issue but similarity in every aspect cannot be expected from diverse group members. Therefore, differences in perception and action are features of a coalition. Differences are not a problem but managing difference is a challenge that requires considerable time and energy.

Sharing credit: It is human nature that everyone likes to take credit for success and minimise their share in a failure. Leadership is responsible for distributing credit, and this is not easy. Sometimes, the leadership itself falls into dispute. In this case, the coalition faces a difficult situation.

Disagreement: Ideally, a coalition must provide space for disagreement within certain limits. Sometimes people overstep the limits and disagree due to personal or organisational interests. It is also difficult to set user-friendly indicators for limits. In this situation, a coalition can collapse.

Time: Decision making in a coalition is always a time-consuming process. Participatory approaches, time management, and harvesting successes from unexpected opportunities in advocacy are interrelated. There should be checks and balances among these aspects in a coalition. This is very abstract and often problematic in real advocacy.

Problem of consensus: A coalition is regarded as a forum that takes decisions based on the consensus of all its members. However, obtaining consensus from a diverse group is a challenge. Making decisions based on the majority is not in the spirit of the coalition.

Not enough time: A coalition is made only for a specific objective. Individuals serving in the coalition are often overloaded by the other responsibilities of their organisation. Therefore, finding enough time for the coalition is challenging.

It is not that advocacy cannot be carried out without a coalition. There are several ways a single organisation can carry out an advocacy initiative following the private approach. It is the nature and the context of the issue that determines the necessity for a coalition.

Finally, a coalition needs a strong consensual leadership, which is often challenging in developing countries. Leadership can be tested in a coalition, which helps develop maturity in leadership. Despite the drawbacks, a coalition is more important than other elements in advocacy and its disadvantages are outweighed by its advantages. Coalitions are especially important for issues with important policy connotations.

Important factors for working in a coalition

Readiness to work with others: A coalition is a way of working together. All members cannot possibly have exactly the same vision, goal, and objectives. However, coalitions are possible because of commonality within diversity. In this context, one has to be ready at the individual and organisational level to work with others.

Mutual trust: Trust must exist among all potential members likely to join the coalition. Trust cannot be built in one day or from one exercise. It depends upon a long-standing cordial relationship. Therefore, trust building exercises should be started long before the actual coalition building on a particular issue.

Common agreement about goal: All members of a coalition must agree to the ultimate goal. However, organisations perceive the various tasks to be undertaken differently. If all members cannot come together and agree a common framework, there are obviously fundamental differences, which will not allow the coalition to work smoothly. An exercise to prepare a common and agreed-upon goal and framework for the advocacy effort is necessary.

Maintaining focus: The leadership of the advocacy effort has the challenge of maintaining the coalition's focus. Sometimes the direction that the advocacy effort might take, the opportunities that arise, and the avenues that could be profitably explored only become visible during the advocacy effort itself. If the focus of the effort is to be changed, a democratic process of decision making must be followed. Decision by consensus is the most reliable for a coalition. In addition, some coalition members may start going in different directions, following their own paths and ambitions. Again, the leadership of the coalition should be aware of this.

Roles and structure: On one hand, a coalition needs strong leadership. On the other, democratic principles are required for successful leadership. These two aspects are to some extent contradictory. To maintain a balance between these factors, a clear structure, hierarchy of responsibility, and clearly identified and agreed roles for all members need to be determined. This takes time, but the more time we spend on this process, the smoother our operation will be.

Balance between changes and consistency: To some degree, a coalition needs to maintain consistency in its members' roles – which organisation/individual is doing what. Changing roles overnight does not help a coalition. However, neither is keeping an individual in the same role all the time very constructive. Provision should be made for changing the leadership as well. However, these changes should not disturb the image a coalition has gained. This is the tricky and challenging part.

Sharing credit and blame: A coalition is built for certain tasks. In advocacy not all tasks will succeed. There is also the possibility of receiving blame, and this could have major consequences for the organisation and for individuals. On the other hand, if the advocacy effort is successful, the credit can brighten an organisation's image. How is praise and blame shared among the coalition members? This is a challenge. General human nature cannot be overlooked in planning the sharing mechanism.

A case study of a mountain state in India

There is a state-level network of NGOs in a mountain state of India (there are several reasons for not mentioning the name of the state and the network). More that 20 NGOs working in different parts of the state had joined this network by March 2004. According to the constitution, the network, its leadership, its working procedures, and its structure look very encouraging. Existing members of the network represent almost all parts of the state. They are also open to accepting new network members.

However, information gathered from other organisations that are not involved in this network reveals a different and sometimes frustrating situation. The non-member organisation made the following comments about this network.

- Most of the larger and more experienced organisations that have gained credit from the people and that hold large projects from different donors have not joined the network. This situation itself indicates that the network does not represent all the NGOs in the state.
- Most NGO members of this network are busy with their own projects in their own localities. Very few people believe in this network. Many others do not see much benefit from strengthening it. Its management, as of March 2004, is professional and remains as a mere skeleton.
- Some people comment that some of the network members do not have a clean image with regard to financial transparency. Some have bad reputations. However, it is difficult to know which member is clean and which is not clean, and to what extent.
- The state's NGOs are polarised into several groups based on leadership. Many people comment that the network was formed by one of these groups. Therefore, there is no question of representation and an independent status in the state. This is one of the reasons why many other NGOs are not joining the network.
- This network lacks a funding base, and is hardly covering its operation costs at present. This network has a hidden interest in conducting different activities for its survival. When the opportunity to start an advocacy initiative came up, this network was very eager to be involved in the process. It claimed that advocacy was the main role of the network and that it would also be possible to form an issue-based coalition among the NGOs and

CBOs. This network could be a good medium for such coalition building. However, it was very hard for a potential member organisation to decide whether or not to join this coalition.

Questions for discussion
- Do you think that a new member should join a coalition under the leadership of this network? Give your reasons.
- What prerequisites does this network need to put in place before initiating an issue-based coalition?
- How could a good coalition of NGO and CBOs be formed in this situation?

Fund Mobilisation Strategies

Fund requirements for advocacy activities depend upon the issue, the communication media, and the location of the target audience. Generally, advocacy-related activities are relatively less costly than normal projects. However, funding is a basic requirement for advocacy as well. For normal service delivery projects, required funding can be raised from different donors with similar interests. Some donors are willing to support advocacy initiatives but not as many as other programmes.

Possible funding sources

Nevertheless, funds are an unavoidable necessity for advocacy. The following are some the possible funding sources for advocacy.

Internal resource mobilisation: Advocacy is an initiative carried out for, and most optimally with, the affected people. Intermediary organisations mainly function as capacity builders for the affected people. If the affected people themselves do not play an active role in advocacy, the effort is ultimately more likely to fail. Internal resource mobilisation is very important. External resources in advocacy tend to create dependency and a culture of patronage, which is not healthy and is unsustainable for advocacy.

Selective donors: If internal resources are insufficient for mobilising people and delivering messages to the target audience, funding from donors can be sought. However, advocacy groups must be selective in identifying and approaching donors. This is because the type of donor you work with determines your public image on the issue that you are dealing with. For example, if you are working with the World Bank on an issue related to the disaster of globalisation, you couldn't justify it to the public.

Selective foundations: Foundations are established to promote certain interests at different levels. Such foundations are available at the country level as well as at the international level. However, the issue you are dealing with and the

interests of such foundations should match. Advocacy groups should be selective and strategic about seeking funding from such foundations.

UN agencies: The UN is ultimately responsible for promoting human rights all over the world through international treaties and convictions. It has also created several wings to enforce such rights. If a national government does not support an internationally approved issue, UN agencies do not hesitate in supporting civil society organisations to pressure the government. Therefore, advocacy groups can identify such UN agencies to seek the required funding.

Interest groups: Interest groups are people who can do nothing themselves but are who are keen to make something happen in society. Such groups can be organised formally or informally. Various interest groups want to promote certain sections of the population to resolve certain issues. For example, some business houses are interested in promoting education for tribal children. Advocacy groups should identify such groups.

Coalition members: Another main source of funding for advocacy is the funding base of coalition members. If the issue is genuine and they are really committed, coalition members should be able to share resources to forward the issue from their own funding base. If required, coalition members could raise funding from their own sources.

Important factors in mobilising funds for advocacy

The factors to consider when mobilising funds are not unique to advocacy. However, there is there are some important considerations, as follows below.

Transparency: Whatever funds an advocacy group uses, there must be a high level of transparency. The level and degree of transparency has to be determined by all members of the coalition. Advocacy groups must remember that financial allegations play a major role in the success of an advocacy effort. If funds collected from any source are misused or mismanaged, your opponents will make this an issue to destroy your advocacy initiative.

Cost effectiveness: Your expenditure profile provides an image to the people you are working with. This does not mean that advocacy activities should always be carried out in an inexpensive way. Your activities could be expensive depending upon the issue and target group audience you are delivering your message to. For example, if you want to deliver your message directly to a Member of Parliament of Nepal, you may need to organise a seminar in an expensive hotel in Kathmandu.

Record keeping: Financial record keeping is important for all expenditures at the public level, and even more important in advocacy. If you are not keeping a proper record of your funds, no one will trust you. Mistrust will arise not only from the public but also from your own coalition members. If you do not record everything properly, you cannot be trusted, however clean you are.

Public auditing: This relates to financial transparency. In advocacy programmes, financial transparency among executives is not enough. Every individual who is devoting time and energy to the effort should know what money is coming in and what expenditures are being made, and for what purpose. Comments from the public should be given top priority for building and thinking about expenditure plans.

Frequent sharing: Sharing is necessary for all public organisations, and even more so in coalitions formed for advocacy initiatives. The sharing can be done regarding the financial situation, programmatic achievements, strategic alterations, and procedural operations. If required, public sharing can help with building trust on a wide scale.

Publications: Raising critical issues and debating is normal in advocacy processes. Likewise, it is also the public's right to ask advocates critical questions. Therefore, all financial transactions should be published periodically and brought into the public arena. After all, there should not be anything to hide in an advocacy organisation.

Embarrassing mistakes: This does not mean that advocacy groups never make any mistakes. What happens after a mistake is made is very important in advocacy. If you defend your mistakes, you are making another mistake to hide the first one. This process then spirals. Advocates must be conscious about this 'mistake adding' process and follow the 'mistake reduction' process that requires immediate acceptance of the mistake with the commitment not to repeat it in future.

Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation is the last stage of the advocacy process. It is close to the stage of agreement between two or more groups for resolution of the problem. Communication strategies applied throughout advocacy play a vital role in bringing target audiences to this stage. Neither party has yet won the game. Either party can still come up with a last trick. From a success and failure point of view, arriving at the stage of negotiation is a success in itself. Nevertheless, it is very challenging, tricky, and demands significant skills. The following tips help enhance the skills needed for this stage in the advocacy process.

Assessment of power dynamics: In most cases when there are negotiations, advocacy groups feel that the issue they have been talking about at length is about to be resolved. This may not always be the case. Calling you for negotiations could be a strategy of the opposition to divide and break the movement. Therefore, you should become even more serious about the final goal rather than starting a victory celebration. Advocacy groups must take their time and observe the power dynamics of the present situation very critically. A realistic estimate of the power relations between the advocacy group and their opponent will give a picture of the possible negotiation. In particular, ask the following questions of your team members and have a critical discussion.

- Who is supporting you and who is supporting your opponents?
- Who are the direct decision makers?
- Who will be influencing the decision behind the scenes?
- What level of preparation have your opponents carried out?
- What could be the best and worst reasons for calling you for negotiation?

Power dynamics are always changeable. Advocates should not assume that the power relations are the same as before. Discussion on all these questions is important for assessing the current power dynamics.

Preparation of negotiation agenda: A negotiation agenda is crucial in advocacy. The agenda itself can determine the entire achievement of your advocacy effort. Keep the following points in mind while setting your negotiation agenda.

- Your agenda for negotiation must match the goal your set for your advocacy campaign before starting the process.
- The negotiation agenda must be discussed and agreed upon by all coalition members and affected people. If a consensus of all individuals is not possible, a consensus of representatives is essential.
- Your agenda must spell out what you want to achieve. If your team agrees to establish some level of bargaining, you have to determine the 'dead end' demarcation of the bargaining.
- Do not forget the power and interests of your opponents. Think about your opponents and their reaction to your agenda. If you can discover your opponents' views, this will help you.
- Your final agenda will be what you will do when your opponent says 'No'. You should be fully prepared for this scenario in the form of an activity or other process.
- You have to maintain a high degree of confidence in your agenda. If your opponents know what you are going to say and offer, you will be in a losing situation.

Mediation arrangements: Mediation is a middle path in advocacy. Depending upon the issue, some people may be already planning a mediating role between

two parties. This is sometimes visible and sometimes not. Some of your coalition members who are able to win your opponent's trust can also play a mediating role in advocacy. The main roles of negotiators are to bring both parties towards a peaceful solution of the problem. To play this role effectively, the following tips are helpful.

- Find impartial and unbiased individual(s) for negotiating roles. Negotiators should not take the side of either party.
- Selected negotiators must be able to win the trust of both sides. If certain people have that image already, it is even better.
- The negotiators must be able to unlock the issue and display it in several components and lock the ideas and opinions of all together.
- They should be able to deal with the problems rather than persons. They should be able to facilitate/moderate heated discussions without personal attacks and avoiding conflict-oriented and bitter language.
- The most important role of mediators is to identify options for mutual gain that lead to a 'win-win' situation.

Selection of timing: Consider that society is not only facing the problems related to your issue. Your opponents might be dealing with several other issues, some of which are larger than yours. For example if a national issue is being hotly debated and you are about to negotiate about a local issue, this may not be an appropriate time. To wait for a better time, you can do some tactful lingering without reflecting any reluctance to negotiate.

The best time for negotiation is when your agenda is receiving attention from the concerned authority. Therefore, the role of the advocate is to conduct informal research and to find an appropriate time. For example, if there is an election going on or just over, it is better not to plan a negotiation meeting because all the authorities are paying attention to something else.

Selection of a negotiating team: Communication and presentation skills play a large role in negotiation. A skilful person can moderate even a tough discussion constructively. Therefore you must select appropriate people for your negotiation team. If you select the wrong people for the team, the likelihood of success declines.

In this regard, the position held and an individual's skills may be different. For example, the chairperson of your advocacy coalition may not be very skilful as a negotiator. If this is the case, you should be open to selecting another person with the proper skills. This does not undermine the chairperson. If the chairperson must be included to maintain protocol, give the chairperson only a limited role.

A negotiation checklist: All preparation for negotiation is done with an ideal view of the opponent. All of your assumptions may not be correct when you sit at the table for the actual negotiation. Many things will emerge suddenly. The negotiation team should be able to deal with all the new opportunities and challenges. The following tips are useful in preparing for a negotiation meeting.

Protocol: A negotiation team should be conscious about the protocol of the members at the meeting. All procedures should fall within an acceptable protocol. If your opponents do not follow the protocol, do not be concerned. This is their problem, but do not overlook the protocol from your side.

Agenda, objective, and bottom line: A negotiation team must be very clear, confident, and should have the authority to discuss the agenda and the objectives. If you have ambitious objectives for bargaining, your bottom lines should be very clear. Not only the team leader but all members should be equally competent in this regard.

Preparation of options: A negotiation dialogue is not possible in a 'dead end' situation. If you have only one option, your opponents will not necessarily agree. For healthy negotiation, both parties should present several options – as many as possible. The more options you can present, the greater is the possibility that the negotiation will be successful.

Supporting documents: You need to collect, prepare, and arrange documents, data, facts, and figures to support your arguments. You need not show or present everything right away but if you are questioned about the facts, you must be able to demonstrate them. If you say, "I will go to the office and bring the information," the strength of the negotiation is reduced.

Number of team members: Generally, negotiation meetings take place with an equal number of members from both parties. There is no question of majority and minority in this kind of discussion. It is always good to fix the number of team members by mutual discussion with your opponent.

Level of privacy: There should not be anything to hide in a negotiation. Ultimately, everything becomes public. However, certain things should be kept in confidence for a while. Therefore, the level of confidence from your side has to be determined before going to the meeting. The negotiation may not be completed in one day. No team member should go beyond the norms set for maintaining the level of confidence. If someone goes beyond this boundary it creates more harm than good.

Site selection: A negotiation meeting at your own location is good, but your opponent must also accept this. People often prefer a neutral site for negotiations and this needs to be decided openly by mutual agreement.

Logistics: Whatever site you agree upon, you need some logistics. Do not depend on your opponent or someone else for logistical arrangements. Your opponent may offer you something if the selected site is favourable to them. For example, they can offer you food, vehicles, or a place to stay. There is no problem about accepting these things which can help to build trust. However, you have to rely on your own preparation.

Risk Management Strategy

Advocacy is not all about confrontation. Advocacy has several modes and methods, depending upon the issue and context. Advocacy is not as simple a task as normal service delivery. You can easily make people happy by a service delivery programme. For example, if you provide food to hungry people, they will be very happy with you. In advocacy, however, the affected people may blame you if they do not get the changes they expect. Therefore, advocacy is not a risk-free initiative. There are several ways to manage risk. The measures for risk management at the programme level can be analysed in three stages.

During preparations for advocacy

Fully legitimate role: Legal legitimacy is the prime condition for advocacy. If your organisation is supporting affected people to initiate their own advocacy campaign, you have to review your conditions and legal status and determine whether or not you are legally allowed to support such groups. If the conditions set in your registration or agreement do not allow for such support but you want to do so anyway, you are taking a risk.

Following a safe approach: Some issues are directly related to the country's mainstream politics. Generally, more important people such as business leaders, experienced politicians, and high profile interest groups become involved in mainstream politics. In this case, you should assess your strength to determine whether you want to start a struggle at this level. In this case, you would need to be prepared to manage greater risks.

No involvement in political debate based on party interests: Advocacy as such involves political discourse since in a democratic society political leaders elected by the public should be the ultimate decision makers. However, tactful advocates can keep advocacy processes from becoming politically polarised. This is a very challenging task, however. You should be careful from the beginning. Entering into the political debate is can have serious risks.

Rise above party interests: This point relates to the multiparty political system. You have to be active in the political process in order to promote desired changes for the poor. However, you should try to keep your arguments above party interests. This is much more tactical and demands a high intellectual capability.

Select honest allies: Select as allies only those who are reasonably honest. If you work with people who have lost social credibility, you cannot maintain your image in society. Having the wrong types of people as allies harms many good organisations.

During advocacy activities

Employ only fair tactics: Advocacy is like a game. There is an equal possibility of winning or losing. How you win and how you lose is also important in this process. If you lose fairly, this will improve your credibility for future advocacy on the same or different issues. However, if you win by compromising the fairness of your tactics, you may gain something at present but will lose your positive image in society, and may have to abandon your interest in advocacy. Therefore, success and failure are facts, but you should never apply unfair tactics in advocacy.

Be tolerant: Tolerance should be an inherent character of advocates. If your opponents disagree with you, and you become angry and publicly upset, this situation will be harmful to your cause. If you remain tolerant and your opponent exhibits anger, this can be a plus point for your advocacy and can even make your opponent feel sympathetic towards you.

Take a far-sighted approach: During your advocacy mission, you will be dealing with several stakeholders one after another. Do not think only about the success or failure in front of you, but consider the long-term relationship and its possible consequences. In one meeting you may be disappointed, but this may lead to avenues for future meetings and achievements.

Get prepared to utilise opportunity costs: In advocacy, you cannot estimate all possible opportunities in the beginning. You should be able to take advantage of unseen opportunities and give up unnecessary elements. Therefore, you should be alert all the time during your advocacy mission.

Make alternative plans: If one element of your plan does not work, what will you do next? For example, if you cannot meet the minister, what will you do? Will you try to meet the secretary? The personal assistant? Or will you simply leave? Similar back up plans and alternatives are required in all advocacy activities. Prepare as many alternatives as possible, and be optimistic that one of the alternatives will work.

At the end of advocacy

Well-prepared negotiations: If you have prepared your negotiation well in advance, you will discover alternatives whether your dialogue succeeds or fails. If you are not prepared well enough, you may face great risks after the dialogue.

Healthy agreement: An agreement takes place in a situation of 'give and take'. It is very hard to find a 'win-win' situation in all issues. In some cases, you may be giving more than your opponent. In some cases, your opponents will be giving more and you will be taking. This depends upon the power relationship and the strength of each party. However, your role is to maintain a healthy environment so that your relationship can continue for any necessary follow-up programmes.

Healthy disagreement: Sometimes dialogues simply fail, but this need not end the relationship. One failure could be stepping stone to future success. At the end of a failed dialogue, sum up the meeting as well as possible in a happy mode. As far as possible, keep the door open for the next meeting.

Risks at the organisational and individual level

Ultimately, individual staff members or volunteers carry out advocacy initiatives in the name of certain organisations or coalitions. Therefore, their individual security in terms of family, career, status, credibility, and benefits throughout the advocacy process is a high priority. Areas of attention can be identified but framing a risk management plan in advance is very difficult. The following questions will be helpful for paying attention to potential risks at the individual level.

- What will you do if your opponent is able to cancel your organisational agreement?
- What steps will you take if your opponent arrests some of your staff? They could even be charged in criminal cases.
- What will happen if your opponent mentally or physically harasses your staff?
- How will you safeguard the family members of your staff who are actively involved in advocacy processes?
- What will you do if you receive a letter or call from your opponent asking you to fire some of your staff members?
- What will happen if your opponent 'buys off' some of your staff members by offering them good incentives?
- What steps could you take if your opponent destroys your physical facilities such as telephone, office, other supplies, etc?
- How will you manage your mission if your opponent succeeds in breaking up your coalition?

Based on the situation and context of the advocacy, several other questions of this type may arise in relation to risks during advocacy initiatives. Advocacy organisations must at least think about these potential risk areas and prepare alternative plans using their best judgement.

7

Synopses of Case Studies

Several case studies of advocacy in action have been made available to ICIMOD by different partners. Some have been written up as formal case studies, while others were submitted as concept notes for future research. Some relevant case studies have been selected and presented in this chapter to provide real examples that can be used for capacity building of community-based organisations in advocacy. Trainers should select those examples that best fit the contextual situation of their trainees.

Traditional Water Preservation System in Uttaranchal, India

Pre-Independence, there were extensive techniques for water preservation existing in Uttaranchal, India; both before and during British rule. With the help of these techniques people were receiving a reliable water supply, for both drinking water and irrigation. Uttaranchal has hilly areas so it was not possible to dig the wells and make big ponds as in the plains. Instead, local people formed committees for the management of 'naula' (canals) 'shroot' (water sources), and 'dhara' (taps). Because of dependence on government facilities, especially after Independence, the participation of the local people was reduced and the use of these techniques is also dwindling.[4]

Today, these methods of water preservation have been almost rejected by local people. Consequently, over the last few years the level of underground water has reduced and the natural water sources (which are formed mainly after rain) are also becoming smaller. In the hilly areas of Uttaranchal the water problem is getting worse. Water sources have to be recharged up to 25% but the water sources are only recharged by 12% to 14% at present. Because of the regular cutting down of forests and land size, it is likely that this recharge percentage will go down in future.

According to a report issued by the World Bank, one sixth of the world's population (more than one billion people) live in places where water is scarce and most of these people reside in India, China, and Pakistan. According to this

---

[4] This case has been adopted from the work of Tarun Joshi from Nainital district, Uttaranchal, India. Joshi wrote this case as a concept note to initiate further research in this area.

report at least 31 countries are facing a water problem. This problem will be greater in future if the right methods of water preservation are not adopted. Through analysis of the whole situation, some civil society organisations have been trying to discover ways to continue traditional water preservation techniques in the Kamoun Mandal of Uttaranchal.

Questions for discussion
- What is the root cause of the problems in this case?
- Do you see any policy connections regarding this problem? If yes, what are the policy issues in this case?
- Do you see any scope for advocacy in this situation?
- Based on the case, who should start the advocacy effort and for what achievements?

Learning from People's Initiatives in Forest Management

The people of Uttaranchal have developed their own indigenous system of people's forest management through centuries of experience of living in a mountain environment. These systems have been characterised by customary laws that regulate access and usage, and inculcate a respect and reverence for sustainability. About 10% to 20% of the villages in Uttaranchal continue to maintain their traditional systems with some modifications, with positive and inspiring results[5].

Over a century of commercial 'scientific forestry' continues to seek to manipulate nature and human behaviour to maximise profits while ignoring the economic and ecological requirements of the highly degraded forests and village communities living side by side. Even so, the collective strength of the people has resulted in first the colonial administration and later the administration of independent India being forced to change the direction of its forest policies after pressure tactics failed to control widespread protests. Various tools have been used effectively, including religious symbolism, the use of the media, and alignment with the freedom struggle. However, even after the initial success of the Chipko Movement, the state is still facing an ecological crisis that with the fast-developing, urban-based aspirations of the youth, is jeopardising the future of the state's forests.

People have been living in close proximity to forests for many centuries in the mountain state of Uttaranchal. Their livelihoods have traditionally depended to a large extent on forest and forest products, and a symbiotic bond has existed between people and forests for generations. They have evolved sustainable systems to manage the forests, alpine grasslands, and other natural areas that

---

[5] Bartawal, Puran (2004) A Case Study on Learning from People's Initiatives: Forest Management and Advocacy in Uttaranchal. Sambandh Network, Uttaranchal, India.

include built-in conservation and natural regeneration practices for biodiversity conservation.

With the advent of British rule after the Gorkha rulers were driven out in 1815, the forests in Uttarakhand became commercially lucrative and a destructive process of wholesale exploitation was initiated. By the end of the 19th century, almost all the commercially valuable forests in the region were taken over by the state. This went hand in hand with an increasing curtailment of people's rights, and anger and resentment soon erupted into many rebellions. To pacify people and seek their cooperation, the British constituted a grievance committee that recommended handing about 10% of the forests back to village communities in British-controlled areas.

The state continues to follow the British claim that villagers are solely responsible for deforestation – they are the enemy, and the only reason forests exist is because of state-controlled 'scientific' forest management. However, the experience of many NGOs associated with the SAMBANDH network of working with the people of Uttaranchal and researching the history of forest management in the state clearly indicates that conservation without meeting peoples' basic household and livelihood needs is simply not possible. People have to meet their basic household and livelihood needs from somewhere. Simply declaring forest areas out of bounds and leaving people to fend for themselves does not solve the problem of degradation, and violates all constitutional rights. Real conservation can only happen when people have a real stake in the survival of the forests they use.

People can only justify their proposed control over management regimes when they can prove 'scientifically' that their traditional systems are equally effective or more effective compared to state-controlled systems in terms of cost-effectiveness in providing biomass for household and livelihood needs, conserving biodiversity, conserving livelihoods, and supporting the local subsistence economy.

In order to prove that people's traditional systems are in many cases highly effective and deserve official support, it is imperative to go beyond the present emotional rhetoric on both sides and explore comparatively the real situation as it exists on the ground. The results of people's systems and state systems need to be examined according to ecological, economic, and social parameters, and matched with their management objectives. Convincing evidence needs to be generated and presented to the institutions that control the financing of the forestry sector, particularly the World Bank, to convince them that they are supporting the wrong systems politically, economically, and ecologically.

The main objective of this study is therefore to document good examples of people-managed forest in Uttaranchal Pradesh, India, and provide a historical analysis of the traditional efforts at advocacy of village communities to maintain control over their survival and livelihood base — the land, water, and forests.

Questions for discussion
- What are the policy issues to regain the rights of mountain people over natural resources?
- What are the ways and means of balancing both the national interest and people's rights?
- How can we verify the roles of civil society organisations in this context? What can social society organisation do in favour of the poor?
- How do you justify people's rights being denied even in a democratic system? Do you see some options to balance these two phenomena?

Van Panchayats in Uttaranchal, India

In the newly-formed state Uttaranchal, there has been a great tradition of forest management that is known as 'Van Panchayat'. Presently, there are more than 7000 Van Panchayats in Uttaranchal. The management of a Van Panchayat is carried out by the Van Panchayat Rules. Moreover, sub-rules can be formed by the Van Panchayat for its internal management. The Van Panchayat rules were first formed in 1931. Some amendments were made to the rules[6] in 1979 and 2001.

As of August 2001, there were 6777 Van Panchayats in Uttaranchal covering an area of 524 108.052 ha. However, it is estimated that the number of Van Panchayats in Uttaranchal is more than 8000 in 11 districts. At present, Van Panchayats occupy nearly 15% of the forest area of the state. The forest areas under Van Panchayats are in excellent condition comprising mostly broad-leaved species. Overall, it can be claimed that forests are managed by communities in a sustainable way to fulfil local demands for fuel, fodder, and timber.

However, the Van Panchayats are facing a large number of problems. The main problems relate to the curtailing of the rights of villagers. These rules were formed in feudal society therefore there is less scope for women and dalits to be active within the Van Panchayat structure. All the provisions are mainly in favour of the higher classes.

---

[6] This case was developed based on the information included in the concept note prepared by Tarun Joshi in July 2004 and a presentation made by Anmol Jain in the Regional Training of Training Workshop on 3 July 2004, Kathmandu.

The Van Panchayats were formed for the consumption of forest products. Although the traditional means of forest preservation were included in the rules, sustaining the environment was not emphasised. However, today it is vital that the management of Van Panchayats must combine villagers' livelihoods with protecting the environment. Both aspects should have equal importance in the rules.

In the year 2001 'Van Panchayat Sanghras Morcha' (people's forum) was formed to raise the voice of villagers against the rules which were curtailing their rights. The 'sarpanch' (chairperson of the Van Panchayat), different representatives of NGOs, intellectuals, and the members of other 'sanghatan' (institutions) participated in this morcha, which organised various meetings and sent some proposals to the government. Consequently, the government formed the 'Van Panchayat Rule Amendment Samiti' (committee). Some amendments to the Van Panchayat rules are still under consideration. However, this morcha could not be effective mainly because of lack of funds, interpersonal conflicts, jealousy, and lack of training in running and managing a federation.

Past experiences indicate that these Van Panchayats, having historical importance in India, should be able to form a federation. This federation could be formed by including elected representatives of Van Panchayats such as the sarpanch (chairperson), 'panch' (executive member) etc. The federation couldn't work from block level to state level. This is the idea spreading to Van Panchayats in Uttaranchal, but nothing concrete had materialised by July 2004.

Questions for discussion
- What are the policy causes of problems in Van Panchayats?
- What are the gaps that can be fulfilled by an advocacy initiative?
- Who are the main stakeholders in this case?
- What could be the process of advocacy for getting expected changes in Van Panchayat rules?

Understanding Advocacy Based on the Context of the Jainta Hills

The working definition of advocacy in the book 'Advocacy for Social Justice' by Cohen, et al. is as follows.

"Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes – including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions – that directly affect people's lives[7].

---

[7] This part of the conceptual analysis is adopted from Nongkynrigh, A.K (2004), in a case study on 'Community Based Organisations of Jainta Hills District, Meghalaya, India'.

Advocacy consists of organised efforts and actions based on the reality of 'what is'. These organised actions seek to highlight critical issues that have been ignored and submerged, to influence public attitudes, and to enact and implement laws and public policies so that visions of 'what should be' in a just, decent society is an overarching framework for these visions. Advocacy organisations draw their strength from and are accountable to the people – their members' constituents, and/or members of affected groups.

"Advocacy has purposeful results: to enable social justice advocates to gain access and voice in the decision making of relevant institutions; to change the power relationships and the people affected by their decisions, thereby changing the institutions themselves; and to result in a clear improvement in people's lives."

The working definition seems a plausible framework because it broadens the social field and the idea of advocacy, but 'value-neutral advocacy' defines advocacy as follows.

"Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes – including public policy and resource allocation decisions within the political, economic, and social systems and institutions – that directly affect people's lives".

This definition highlighted by Cohen is limited. According to him,

"In theory, the list of those who advocate has no bounds. A society should hear from a plurality of interests – economic, ethnic, occupational, geographic, ideological and so on. In reality, when decisions are made, many voices are left out and their issues are never considered."

The working definition seems to enlarge the scope of the meaning and practice of advocacy, and also integrates varied elements and experiences from context to context. Therefore it is not out of context to argue that the findings of the study on the community-based organisations of the Jaintia Hills and their work is an example of micro-level based advocacy for social justice. The justification for arguing thus is because of the reasons outlined below.

- These organisations resisted and challenged the idea of the political fragmentation and religious segregation of the village community. They used non-protest methods of finding ways to resolve the issues at hand by giving a good example through their mixed membership, and by discussions with people and village institutions during training or awareness programmes. They may not have been totally successful, but the fact that they have taken the initiative is in itself an edifying example.

- They have been raising critical issues such as the problems faced by educated and illiterate youths, youths in difficult circumstances, poverty, the participation of women in decision making and recognising their role in the society, economic development, conserving the environment, and other issues affecting the lives of the people.
- The nearest and most immediate institution of the village and the villagers is the village council and its leaders. Organisations are carrying out their tasks by working with the village councils and have been putting forward various issues for consideration, and assisting them whenever called upon.
- The idea and application of bridging the villages with the government departments and other development based agencies by organising village-based programmes and bringing these agencies to the village is another method they have adopted, and by doing so they have been able to provide space for direct interaction between the villagers and the agencies.
- The network of CBOs and its fission is another aspect which has contributed towards the sharing of resources, information, and promoting ideas and the ownership of leading, acting, and doing something for others.
- On their own they have shown that they are directly involved by evolving innovative initiatives to solve issues affecting people's lives.
- By organising awareness programmes they provided a forum for the public to debate, interact, and discuss varied issues.

From the above analysis and the information gathered by the study we can see two binary aspects which will provide us with a clear direction of what type of recommendation needs to be suggested for future intervention and support. These are as follows.

- **Strengths:** It is very clear that the community-based organisations of the Jaintia hills district are potential organisations for carrying out advocacy for the poor and the marginalised sections of the population. The types of activities they have been conducting so far are evidence of this fact.
- **Weaknesses:** The strengths may be stymied by factors like organisational management, leadership skills, clarity of ideas, and application of ideas in trying to bring about positive change.

Questions for discussion
- What does this analysis add to your understanding about advocacy in your own working context?

- Which points from this analysis match your own context?

- How do you verify the strengths of organisations of your constituencies based on the finding from the Jainta Hills?

Changing Status of the Dalit Community in the Eastern Hills of Nepal

Generally speaking, 'dalit' is defined as those castes and classes of people that are deprived of their rights, social prestige, and dignity. In the Nepalese context, the classes of people who are considered 'untouchable' have fallen behind economically, are looked down on socially, lack awareness in political participation, are less conscious academically and adopt caste-designated jobs. They are referred to as the oppressed[8].

In Nepal a social order composed of four castes and eighteen different sub-castes was put in place in the Lichchhavi period (200-879 A.D.). Since then, the practice of untouchability has been customary. New occupations emerged along with the development of society and the Aryans, the then-ruling class, had to have a double standard in dealing with the non-Aryans. In that situation, the aristocrats and the ruling class people of the Aryan origin continued subjugating the working class and slaves in order to establish and maintain their domination and supremacy. Later on, when King Jayasthiti Malla (1360-1395 A.D.) divided people into 4 castes, 38 communal classes, and 725 ethnic groups, the customary practice of untouchability became strongly institutionalised in the society.

In Nepal there are two types of dalits – the dalits originating from the plains (Terai) and those of hill origin. The dalits of hill origin mainly involve the ethnic groups Kami, Damai, Sarki, Badi, Gaine, etc. The oppressed of the Terai origin involve the ethnic groups like Chamar, Dusadh, Dhobi, Dum, Batar, Khatwe, Mushar, Halakhor, Jhangar, Pattharkatta, Kanu, Teli, Kalawar, Jhangad, Dom, etc. There are also untouchable ethnic groups within the Newar community itself. They involve Kasai, Kusule, Pode, Kulu, Harhuru, Dhobi, etc. But these ethnic groups are only treated as untouchable in some places. So they simply belong to the neglected classes of people.

The total population of Nepal is 22.2 million, out of which the dalit class constitutes 2.9 million (census of 2001). This figure is 12.9% of the total population. About 90% of these people live below the absolute poverty line. The average life expectancy of these people is 50.8 years (HDR 1996) whereas that the average life expectancy of a Nepali is 55 years. The literacy rate of the Nepalese in general is 48%, while that of the oppressed is only 10.7%. The literacy rate of dalit women is only 3.3%. Twenty three per cent are completely landless and 48.7% of them have pieces of land only big enough to construct a small house (Mukti Path, Year 1, Volume 1, 2003). The highest population of dalits in Nepal is in a district called Saptari located on the eastern plain land.

---

[8] Subedi, Bidur. (2004). 'Changing Status of Dalit Community in the Eastern Hills of Nepal: A Case Study of Dhankuta District, Nepal'. Human Rights, Social Awareness and Development Centre (HUSADEC), Nepal.

The movement for social equity is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. When reviewing this long-running movement, the following can be cited as examples of success.

- In 1948 the dalit students of Nepal were not allowed to sit and study together with students of other castes. Protesting against this practice, some of dalits of Dhankuta district went to the 'badahakim' (district administrator), to file a complaint. The badahakim said that a change in the rule was not possible without a policy change from higher up. As a result, Gajaram Yogi, an alumnus of Darjeeling, built a separate hut at the side of the playground and started to teach oppressed class students.

- Towards 1978 'Hotel Bhet', a hotel in Dhankuta Bazaar, prohibited dalits from entering the hotel. The dalits had to eat sitting outside and also had to wash their cups and plates themselves. Protesting against this treatment by the hotel owner, the members of 'Nepal Rastriya Dalit Jana Bikas Parishad Dhankuta' (an oppressed class organisation operating in Dhankuta district at that time) went to the district administration office. In response to their complaint, the Chief District Officer ordered the hotel owner to open his hotel to all classes of people.

- The dalits were not allowed to enter a temple at a place known as Muga in Dhankuta district. This place was famous for the politics of Nepal because a person who became the prime minister five times and for more than ten years was from this place. Even in this village, some dalit women collectively entered into the holy temple in 1999. During the years 1999-2003 several such temple-entering actions took place in this district very successfully.

- A dalit community offered a party to a group of youth club members during a big festival in 1999. The young members participated in the party happily but when they returned to their home, their old generation did not allow them to enter the houses. Later, the old generation allowed them to enter after daubing the floor with cow dung and purifying them ceremonially. This tendency indicates that younger generation is becoming more open in comparison to the older generation.

- On 14 April 2002 the 'Dalit Mahila Sangh Dhankuta' organised a get-together with a view of minimising the discrimination against each other within the oppressed community itself. The feast was held at a park and was attended by 50 people including men and women of various ethnic groups belonging to the oppressed class such as Bishwokarma, Damai, and Sarki.

- There is discrimination against each other between Kami and Sunar, too. Inter-caste marriage between these two ethnic groups is not socially recognised. In such a context the Bishwokarmas (Kamis) recognised the marriage of their daughter with a man belonging to a Sunar family by inviting the married daughter and the son-in-law to their home and offering 'tika' (a sacred red mark on the forehead), clothing, and blessings to them ceremonially on the occasion of the Dashain festival (the greatest festival of Hindus) of 2000 A.D.

- In 1999 a peon (lowest level of personnel) at the Agriculture Development Bank scolded a dalit for touching the water filter. Protesting against this, a delegation of representatives from dalit organisations of this district went to the bank and asked for legal action to be taken against the offender. In response, the peon was brought before the office in charge of the bank and was compelled to apologise for the offence both orally and in writing.

The examples above of successes in campaigning for social equality suggest that the movement of the oppressed class has helped significantly in raising the awareness of the target community and bringing changes to the conservative ideas and attitudes of the non-oppressed communities. It is because of these successes that incidents of inhuman treatment such as discrimination in public places like temples and shrines, government institutions and organisations, inns and rest-houses, hotels, educational institutions, and various cooperatives have not taken place. If any event is seen to support the practice of untouchability, this will be acted against collectively and immediately. This process of counter-action has helped to minimise discriminatory practices.

Questions for discussion
- What are the root causes of the problem in this case?
- What the policy issues?
- How relevant is this case in other hill areas? What are the common features of the case?
- How do you comment on successful events from advocacy perspective?

Community-based Organisations in the Jainta Hills

Meghalaya was first carved out as an autonomous state with the two hill districts of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills of Assam in 1970. It became a fully-fledged state in January 1972. Located in the northeast, it is a strip of land spread along the northern boundary of Bangladesh and is one of the smallest states in India with an area of approximately 22 429 sq. kms. The length of the international boundary is about 423 kms. Transportation is mainly by road from Assam. It mostly comprises steep hills and deep gorges, with valleys and plain land being very limited[9].

In the case of the Jainta Hills, community-based organisations have been addressing some critical issues affecting a village in particular and the district as a whole. These organisations accept that they have not been able to accomplish as much as they wanted, and are still working towards their goals. The issues affecting the growth and development of the villagers are as follows.

---

[9] Nongkynrih Kyrham, A. K. (2004). 'A Study of Community-based Organisations of Jainta Hills District in the State of Meghalaya, India'. Department of Sociology, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya.

- The party-based politics of the Indian democratic system of governance has brought along with it political factionalism and fragmentation of the cohesive village community, which is sharply divided into party lines.
- Differentiating on the basis of religion is another issue faced by the villagers and the society as a whole. The notion of keeping with people of one's own religion stymied the initiative to bring about social change and develop the villagers.
- Politicisation of the village community and the village councils has affected the poor and marginalised domestic groups.
- Information about various centrally sponsored schemes and local area development schemes are the privilege of a select few. The majority of the population of the village has no knowledge about them. Secondly, the poor have no access to any institutions or information.
- The poor are not organised because there are few facilitators or organisations working for them.
- The level of literacy in villages is very low, especially in young people and women. This makes them more vulnerable to being influenced emotionally by powerful agents who may exploit them for some other ends.

It is difficult to draw any absolute conclusion from the study since it has not been able to cover all the CBOs of the district. However, the study brought up some very important issues which can be divided into two broad categories: (a) critical issues confronting the life of the people, and (b) intervention by organisations.

The following critical issues relevant to the entire district were highlighted as a result of the study.

- Parliamentary democracy has brought two types of changes: namely that the participation of people in politics has led to political factionalism and favouritism. Due to this problem village solidarity and unity is increasingly becoming more vulnerable and unstable. A contributing factor is that people are not politically educated and are exploited by political parties
- Religion is another problem. The problem is not about religion as matter of faith but as an issue of identity. The segregation between members of the same ethnic group on the basis of religious persuasions has led to the formation of villages according to religion or localities being segregated within the same village
- Poverty in the villages is contributed to partly by the issues cited above. Illiteracy, inaccessibility to correct information, very few organisations working in the villages, lack of village-level leadership skills, and the leaders being politicised has compounded the problem.
- Isolated or pocket-based development exists but there is a lack of extension and networking.

The district is facing a number of challenges, but on the other hand there are concerned people who are taking positive remedial measures to overcome these challenges. For example, the CBOs whose actions are outlined below.

- The history of these organisations is very recent but they have a high potential.
- The activities they have been organising have a semblance of commonality. This is because they promote and work for the development of the people by creating opportunities, pursuing economic development, changing attitudes and behaviours, and educating the people to work together and find solutions through collective action.
- These organisations are small in size and have very limited resources, but they have been organising and providing new inputs, skills, information, and networks, and show people the positive paths of development and change.
- These organisations can be major prime movers of social change in the district. But they are faced with constraints like lack of proper organisational management, leadership skills, communication skills, accounting skills, projects formulation, and skills in building strong and effective networks.

Questions for discussion
- What are the critical issues identified in the Jainta Hills?
- Which are the issues lacking policies?
- Which are the issues related to policy enforcement?
- What issues are important from an advocacy point of view?

Social Capital in Local Governance, Pakistan

Two factors encouraged network formation in Ajad Kasmir (AJK). Firstly, the National Rural Support programme (NRSP) maximised its ability to reach the poor. Once the networks had been established, NRSP staff were able to save time and resources by using them as intermediaries with the COs. The second factor was that activists and community organisation (CO) members wanted to scale up the COs' role in the Union Council by creating a platform to pool resources and undertake collective initiatives to overcome constraints and problems[10].

The CO office-bearers are fully accountable to the members, and report on all financial and operational activities during fortnightly meetings. These mechanisms and processes ensure that benefits are not hijacked by the local elite, and greatly reduce the chances of resource fungibility. As a result, effective local leadership, a prerequisite for social capital formation and utilisation, emerges.

---

[10] Baluch, M. Saleem (2004). 'A Case Study on Development of Social Capital to Promote Local Governance in the Mountain Areas of Pakistan'. The National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). Islamabad, Pakistan.

Understanding the role, the tensions, and the successes of COs in the networks is important for understanding the processes of social capital formation and utilisation. The networks are able to act as a means for the flow of information, pooling resources, and sharing expertise, thus bringing the benefits of economies of scale. Discrete COs are far less able to lobby for resources.

The three networks are (1) Women's Welfare Organisation Poonch (WWOP); (2) Kiran Welfare Organisation; and (3) Rural Community Development Foundation (RCDF). The WWOP was formed in 1997, KWO in 1999, and RCDF in 2002. The levels of organisational structure, access to financial support, and ability to undertake developmental activities of these networks are linked to their age: the more established the network, the more refined are its systems and approaches.

Although NRSP has actively promoted network formation in Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan, the networks have only taken root and flourished in AJK. In Punjab and Sindh the networks failed because of conflict amongst member COs. In southern Balochistan, the COs are too far apart for network members to meet regularly. The networks have taken root in AJK because of the dedicated efforts of individual social organisers and the dedication of trained and skilled community activists.

In AJK, the scattered settlements, poor infrastructure, and mutual dependence on natural resources result in community interdependence. The establishment of a network made it possible for COs in different villages to share water and other resources. Similarly, the roads benefit a number of contiguous communities. Education and health services need to be centrally located around a number of communities. This suggests that there are fewer conflicts, or better mechanisms to resolve them, in AJK than elsewhere.

According to Abdul Rahim, the NRSP Regional Programme Manager in Rawalakot, "The networks were established for sharing experiences and pooling human and physical resources. In the Rural Water and Sanitation Project in 1990-2000, 1600 schemes were implemented in AJK with a World Bank loan to the Government of Pakistan. Similarly, the Integrated Land Management and Area Development Projects and the Northern Education Project were implemented through networks of CBOs. Many activists saw the benefits of widely-based networks and began to encourage the NRSP COs to form them."

The WWOP President and staff say they have been successful in socially empowering rural women and promoting the understanding that rural women are able to undertake development activities and manage education and health activities. The WWOP has also encouraged women's roles in politics. For

example, finally one candidate[11] was selected as an MLA who is now working with the WWOP to undertake development activities. With the support of this MLA, the WWOP is now a member of various forums including the AJK National Coordination Council of NGOs.

The COs and network members cover about one third of the total households in the area.

Due to their collective strengths and activism, the COs are involved in holding local public ceremonies and festivals, and in promoting community development activities. They are also engaged in measures related to promoting the welfare, good health, safety, and convenience of village residents, in addition to assisting the village-level revenue officials in preparing records, assessments, and revenue collection.

The evolution from COs to networks involved both 'push' and 'pull' factors. The push factors are primarily the deep poverty, lack of physical infrastructure and exclusion from local decision making. NRSP also encouraged the establishment of networks by convincing CO members to create a platform for sharing resources and expertise. The 'pull' factors include the work of activists who were motivated to magnify the role of the CO at the Union Council level. Institutional factors included NRSP's encouragement, and the opportunity to access economic resources from the government and from donor agencies.

The networks present a successful model of local development, an effective and efficient local governance system in terms of capacity building of the COs. They also help to improve transparency and accountability in the working of Union Councils and line agencies. There are certainly some opportunities for these networks to expand. The government is implementing some large-scale development programmes through CBOs. The most important of these are the Community Infrastructure Services Project (CISP), an IFAD-funded project to be implemented by GoAJK; and the Integrated Land Management Programme. Technical and financial support from the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) is expected to create significant opportunities to strengthen and develop the networks.

Questions for discussion
- What are the differences between local NGOs and networks based on this case?
- What are the issues these local networks are dealing with?
- How do you examine the strategies of these local networks for policy advocacy?

---

[11] In AJK, both men and women are eligible to stand for election as MLAs but women do not contest elections.

Advocacy Approaches in Local Self-governance

The Rural Technology and Development Centre – Local Self-Governance Group (RTDC-LSG) is an NGO working to promote local self-governance in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India. Having worked on this issue for over a decade, RTDC-LSG has developed a model of local self-governance called Panchayat Micro-Planning (PMP) and is engaged since April 2003 in an officially declared pilot demonstration of it in the Bhatiyat Development Block with the support of the state's Panchayati Raj and the Rural Development Department (PRRDD). This study examines RTDC-LSG's advocacy in the Bhatiyat pilot trial with the goal of illuminating successful advocacy approaches [12].

The contemporary situation of local self governance in the Indian mountains is not encouraging. Although it has been ten years since India made a constitutional provision for local self governance through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), this framework has disappointingly not done enough to support community empowerment in practice. Planning is still done in a top-down manner that does not address the felt needs of the people and results in poor governance outcomes.

In the years leading up to the Bhatiyat pilot trial, RTDC-LSG has worked to better understand the nature of local self governance issues, design the PMP model, advocate at all levels for local self governance, network with other stakeholders, and test and refine its perspective through a series of field demonstrations. Local self governance presents an especially interesting advocacy challenge because it involves convincing not only a resistant government filled with vested interests, but also the people themselves who are meant to be empowered through it.

With this understanding of the local self governance scenario, RTDC-LSG has applied itself to intensive advocacy with communities in Bhatiyat, PRI representatives, all levels of the bureaucracy, and the key political figures in the area. This study examines the process of the accomplishments in Bhatiyat, the pressures RTDC-LSG deals with in advocacy, and the lacunae it currently faces. This overall experience is then analysed to extract generally applicable lessons for advocacy.

What are the advocacy lessons we can draw from the experience of RTDC-LSG in the Bhatiyat PMP pilot trial? It is important to note that the most effective advocacy would depend on a holistic approach that incorporates all these points. For instance, it may not be especially helpful to network with other

---

[12] Garg, Arjun (2004). 'Advocacy Approaches for Promoting Local Self Governance: A Case Study of Bhatiyat Block, Himachal Pradesh, India.' Rural Technology and Development Centre, India.

stakeholders if one does not pay attention to maintaining a good reputation. Likewise, all of these guidelines are interconnected, in that adhering to any one of them has a positive effect on all the others.

For the advocate, change can never come too quickly, but when working intensively at the field level, one tends to forget that massive shifts in development occur only at their own gradual, deliberate pace. Success ultimately stems only from the people's political will. NGOs are ultimately legitimised only if what they advocate is what the public wants.

One of RTDC-LSG's strengths is that its advocacy is based on real-world field trials that help improve the model of local self governance and provide unambiguous factual evidence of viability that is more powerful than any theoretical argument. Information, education, and communication about the issue are a vital prerequisite to doing advocacy. The advocate must himself be knowledgeable, and must transfer that knowledge to the intended beneficiaries and other stakeholders at every stage. A thorough grasp of local self governance issues and constant outreach has enabled RTDC-LSG to create understanding, trust, and support among all classes of stakeholders. Personal experience of the Pradhan office and the Bhatiyat area has been particularly helpful.

The government is not a monolith. There are sensitive people and sub-institutions in every area and level of the government who will be helpful if identified and given an opportunity. Moreover, different constituencies within the government can be played against one another. Constructive collaboration is generally more effective than confrontation, particularly when trying to reform the bureaucracy. When a confrontational stand is needed, it should be disassociated from the collaborative aspect of the advocacy so that enemies are not made unnecessarily.

Networking with other stakeholders, particularly larger-level organisations and forums, pays off in a variety of ways in the long term, fostering awareness of how one's agenda fits into the larger scenario and building useful contacts for the future. To move ahead with this principle building and maintaining credibility of advocates must be a constant concern. The attitude of advocacy must never be that of asking for a favour from those in power; rather, advocacy should be used from the perspective of demanding one's rights.

Finally, advocacy has already paid many dividends in Bhatiyat, but it remains to be seen how much further the RTDC-LSG can carry the pilot trial and what impact this success have on the larger picture. The primary advocacy challenge RTDC-LSG will face in the future is to move beyond local trials and mobilise a state-level, mass movement to build a political and bureaucratic consensus that

will finally overcome the stubborn resistance of vested interests in the existing power structure.

Questions for discussion
- What are the main issues of local governance in the Indian mountains based on this case?
- What are the policy or behavioural causes of existing issues?
- What are the useful lessons that RTDC has learned from Bhatiyat?
- To what extent are the Bhatiyat lesions are replicable in other contexts?

Watersheds as a Tool for Good Governance

The evolution of the watershed concept, as a development intervention aimed at productive and sustainable use of basic natural resources such as land and water, has come a long way since the start of this intervention about half a century ago. The word 'watershed' was derived from a German root, namely 'Wasserscheide'' that was adopted by the American hydrogeologists, defining watershed as a geo-hydrological unit, which comprised land and water within the confines of a drainage divide[13].

India is endowed with vast natural resources in terms of land, water, and biodiversity. In terms of land resources, out of 329 million hectares reported area, only about 142.82 million hectares is presently under cultivation, out of which, about 90 million hectares is rainfed. Paradoxically 35% of the irrigated area accounts for only 55% of the food production and 65% of the rainfed area contributes to only 45% of food basket for the country. This underlines a clear need to give high priority to the integrated approach for watershed management.

Watershed development was restructured during the Ninth Five-Year Plan to make it more community-oriented and participatory in approach, allowing a higher degree of flexibility and decentralisation. Success in the planning and implementation of watershed development depends crucially on the extent and type of community involvement, the institutions involved, their nature, and the extent of empowerment.

There are ample examples that women are the best managers of natural resources and their empowerment in watershed programmes will result in good management and replenishment of resources. In an actual sense, most of the watershed programmes are focused on developing land. Landowners are 'men' therefore the whole project becomes male-oriented in theory and in practice.

---

[13] This case is adopted from a case study carried out in 2004 by SUTRA (Society for Social uplift through Action – Jagjitnagar, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Women are usually involved in the community institutions just for the sake of satisfying guidelines.

Guidelines are supposed to provide a broad framework to steer decision makers towards choosing the appropriate solutions. These guidelines are prepared and circulated by the central government.

The main goal was to make women self-reliant by initiating processes to give them space in decision making and to make their self-reliance sustainable by the end of the project cycle.

Their capacities were built for purposeful development. They were also made aware of the prevailing situations and how to employ people and manage them. To achieve the objective of women as agents of change, regular and process oriented inputs were contributed. These were: economic independence and upliftment, infrastructure development (safe drinking water), reproductive health and hygiene, decentralised governance, and gender.

For the purpose of study, these women's groups were analysed as follows.

Power to: This relates to having decision-making ability, and power to solve problems. Within this sphere we also try to locate individual decision-making and leadership.

Power with: This involves people who organise with a common purpose and have an understanding about achieving common goals. This is associated with coalitions and building alliances.

Power within: This refers to self-confidence, self-awareness, and assertiveness.

There are 17 SHGs with a total membership of 216. Dalits make up 34% of the membership. The women were briefed about the importance of reproductive health. Apart from general health and hygiene, they were sensitised about the social disorder arising due to female foeticides, which is also against human rights and dignity. People were given training on decentralised governance. After training and sensitisation through guided discussions, 193 people actively participated in the Gram Sabha, out of which 95 were women.

It is important to involve adolescent women in watershed management, as they are the real barrier breakers. Our efforts were to make many Yuvati (adolescent women's) groups but to date there are two existing groups who have saving of Rs 900 and these groups are helping others whose economic condition is not good by providing them with uniforms and books. They have started celebrating their birthdays, which is not the usual practice in villages as only boys'

birthdays used to be celebrated. Later on, a total of 154 adolescent women were trained on reproductive health, decentralised governance, watershed and natural resource management.

Kanyon Village

One of the members of the SHG of Kanyon village was not in the usual mood and spirit. This continued for almost three months, and she would be a mute spectator in the meetings, which was not her usual style. Many times, she was asked for the reasons but she never uttered a word. How could she say anything in open meeting about an ongoing attempt from her father in law for a sexual favour? Her husband was a daily labourer and taking advantage of his absence in daytime, he would say inappropriate things to her. He had gone to the extent of touching her when she was serving food or catching her from behind in the 'obra' (place where livestock is kept, a little way from the house). She was in a great fix, if she was to tell her husband he would not believe her and it could invite lot of trouble for her. As she narrates in her voice:

"If I say to my husband that your father touches me with wrong intentions he would say 'He likes you as a Bahu and that is his way of greeting,' and if she would have pestered him he would have found fault in me."

The women suspected some foul play and decided to find out what was the matter. One of the neighbours who was also a member of SHG volunteered to investigate. She started spending more time with the girl and slowly she revealed what was going on. This matter was taken very seriously by the women, who decided to call the father-in-law to the next meeting. He never turned up. The next morning all the women caught the old man off-guard. Her husband was also asked to stay for a while until they were finished. They told the whole story to her husband and issued a strict warning to the father-in-law. Despite that the father-in-law never stopped. In next visit to her place, the women told the old man that at his age it would be very humiliating as they would garland him with slippers and make him walk through all the villages. They told the old man to stay at another place, which was far from the house. Thus, the nightmare of the woman was controlled. There was a transformation in the SHG as apart from dealing with financial matters they helped another woman.

Gopatia Village

As it has been rightly said, it is very difficult to break a bundle of sticks but easier to break one. This classic case of helping each other is in Gopatia village where the SHG and VDC decided to make a drinking water tank.

During construction there were nine users of the tank, therefore labour was expected from all of them. But there were three households which were female-headed and they were the sole earners. Their children were also small and if

involved in the labour, their schooling would have been adversely affected. So these three households were not in a position to give both money and labour. This matter was taken up by the SHG in their monthly meeting. These women narrated their problem. After giving it serious thought all the members decided to help these women.

All the SHG members decided to give some time as labour for the construction of the tank. The contribution from the community was fixed at 15% and these women got that much money deducted from their labour payments. These women could have taken all the money but they all contributed Rs 500 for their self-help group. Thus, SHG was successful in the attempt to create a community-based organisation as a safety net for the unprivileged.

Dhaun Village

In Dhaun village a husband physically abused his wife. She was so brutally assaulted that she could not even come for the meeting. When the women enquired about the member, they came to know about the reason for her absence. All the women decided to call her husband along with mother-in-law to their meeting. He came to the meeting and was asked to explain the physical abuse. The man realised his mistake and apologised for the same and promised them to repeat the episode. Her mother-in-law was also warned since she did not come forward to rescue her daughter-in-law.

In a routine inspection of watershed work, the project officer of DRDA came to visit 'talon ban kala'. A joint meeting of SHGs was called in Dhaun. During discussion, the project officer lit a cigarette and he was about to enjoy the first drag. All the women asked him not to smoke in the meeting as they have a rule that nobody smokes in the meeting. The women requested him that if you want to smoke then kindly go outside and smoke. They also told him that they usually take Rs 50 as fine but said that since he was not aware about the rule they would exempt him. Looking at the guts of women, he was impressed. He said this was real empowerment.

In order to create awareness about the menace of female foeticide SUTRA organised a rally. Eighty-nine women from the watershed participated and they started a movement in their village to see that these kinds of killings are not part of their respective villages.

Questions for discussion
- What examples can we learn from this case for advocacy in relation to local issues?
- What are the elements in this case that hit the policy issues?
- List the advocacy tools used in this watershed area.
- Which elements of this case can be replicable in other contexts?

Livelihood Improvement in Rampuriya Village

Rampuria forest village is located to the southeast of Darjeeling town in India. It falls within the Senchel Wildlife Sanctuary under the jurisdiction of Wildlife Division I, Darjeeling. The total area of Rampuria forest block is 300 ha and it lies at an altitude of 1500 metres to 1800 metres above sea level, facing southeast. This village was first established in 1953, as a temporary settlement by the Forest Department. People from the nearby areas were brought in for felling operations carried out by the Department. At the time of establishment, there were only 17 households dominated by the Tamang community. The forest department provided the labourers with marginal landholdings for basic agricultural purposes and allowed them to collect dried twigs and broken stems for subsistence[14].

The present livelihood pattern of the village community is primarily agricultural. Potatoes are the main cash crop, which is supplemented by cardamom and other vegetable production, mainly peas, squash, pumpkins, beans, and carrots. Yet, Rampuria forest village community continues to exist in poverty due to an unfavourable agroclimatic condition. Factors such as extreme cold (minimum temperature – 3° Celsius, maximum temperature 17° Celsius), unsteady rainfall, sandy loam soil with high acid content, and soil erosion make it very difficult for the villagers to have good agricultural yields. The problem is further compounded by the fact that the average landholding is only 0.1011715 ha (1210 square yards).

It is, however, interesting to note that the poverty is not entirely of an economic nature. Poverty also prevails in terms of lack of educational facilities for children, poor health and improper sanitation conditions, inaccessibility to the basic services provided by the state and the central governments, and the power to voice opinions for access to basic social, economic, and cultural rights.

Rampuria forest village is one of the many forest villages that were established in the early 1900s when the forest department brought in labourers for forestry operations such as logging and establishing forest plantations during the British reign. The labourers were given small pieces of land on lease for cultivation, to be renewed every 10 years, but their main source of income was as wage earners in forestry operations. The meagre landholdings are not enough to sustain the livelihoods of these people. The total village land is 41.38 acres with an area of 14.82 acres available for agricultural activities. The average land holding per family is 1.38 acres with an availability of 0.42 acres for agriculture. This village has 0.85 acres of dry land, 2.35 acres of wasteland and 21.45 acres is used for cardamom cultivation.

---

[14] This case is adopted from a case study carried out by ATREE (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment) about the impacts of social mobilisation in Rampuriya village in 2004

In order to mobilise the forest village community, the advocacy strategy adopted by ATREE-EHP included equal participation from the village community, Wildlife Division I, other government agencies, civil societies, and Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council (DGAHC). No economic or social activity within the forest village is carried out without the prior knowledge or approval of the Wildlife Division I. The process of establishing relationships with the concerned institutions starts right from the very first step of selection of project villages. All the project villages of ATREE-EHP have been selected after detailed consultation with Wildlife Division I.

The role of each of the above-mentioned institutions is kept in mind and equal importance is attached to each of these institutions during the project implementation period. During the process of village development plan that is essentially laid out by the village community, suggestions and feedback is regularly taken from the concerned departments. Thus along with the village community, the authorities also become a part of the process, and this enables the programme to gather momentum. Special attention is paid to the fact that the activities being framed do not breach the mandate of any of the above-mentioned institutions, nor do they violate the environmental or rural legislations in place.

One of the most distinct advantages of the participation of the authorities in the process is in galvanising the community members to turn the objectives for village and community development into success stories. This results in an energetic community and raises the probability of achieving the goals and objectives of attaining basic human rights through sustainable livelihood patterns. The other advantage of this strategy is that it gives to the village community the much-needed exposure to the authorities in power. As a result, fear and the perceived antagonistic attitude between the village community and the authorities is also diluted. This exercise has opened up avenues for the village communities to communicate directly with the authorities in power to address issues of utmost importance. The community members are no longer wary of the departments and interact regularly with these bodies.

Periodic visits by the concerned authorities to Rampuria forest village has also increased due to their involvement in the activities. This serves a dual purpose of effective implementation of the programmes and also keeps a check on the surrounding ecosystem that most of the community members are heavily dependent on. Through all these activities, interaction between the villagers and the authorities has improved significantly and this can only augur well for the village community of Rampuria Forest Village.

Questions for discussion
- What are the policy issues in this case?
- Examine the activities carried out by ATREE in Rampuria from the advocacy point of view
- List the learning points from this case as examples for advocacy