

*Farmer-led Integrated Upland Watershed  
Management Trainers' Resource Book*

*Module 3*

*Social Profiling and Tools for  
Farmers' Mobilisation and  
Communication for Watershed  
Management*

# SOCIAL PROFILING AND TOOLS FOR FARMERS' MOBILISATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

## (1) Objective of Module

- To clarify the role of social sciences
- To discuss the concepts of participation and empowerment and ways to facilitate these
- To understand the role of communication

## Background

### (2) What are the social sciences?

- Social sciences investigate society in social, cultural, economical, and political aspects which are complex and interlinked.

### (3) How can it be used for watershed management?

- To analyse and understand the communities where the programme is to be conducted
- To support the field worker and project planners
- To facilitate these communities in managing their watersheds

### (4) How are social sciences relevant for watershed management programmes?

- They put people at the centre of development, without which the project would fail.
- They incorporate human behaviour.
- They take into account varying socioeconomic and agro-ecological environments, determining the success and sustainability of the programme.
- They look at the farming communities in their uniqueness, i.e.,
  - their social system,
  - cultural norms,
  - economic characteristics,
  - gender relations,
  - political analysis, and
  - interdependencies.

- They help to gain a proper understanding of participation and empowerment and consequently of participatory methods.
- Social sciences can help in observing existing resources and potentials such as indigenous technical knowledge and group organization.
- They can help in gaining an insight into legal and customary rights.
- They look at power, gender relations, and leadership.
- They can distinguish social and cultural taboos.
- They can examine the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders.

### (5) What would happen if social sciences are not integrated into development programmes?

- Development programmes will not be tailored to:
  - people's needs,
  - beliefs and perceptions,
  - interests, and
  - the social situation.

- Programmes with emphasis on only technical aspects are known to fail for this reason.
- As a consequence, such programmes are not sustainable and may even create a bigger gap between advantaged and disadvantaged members of the community.

### (6) What caution should be observed with social sciences?

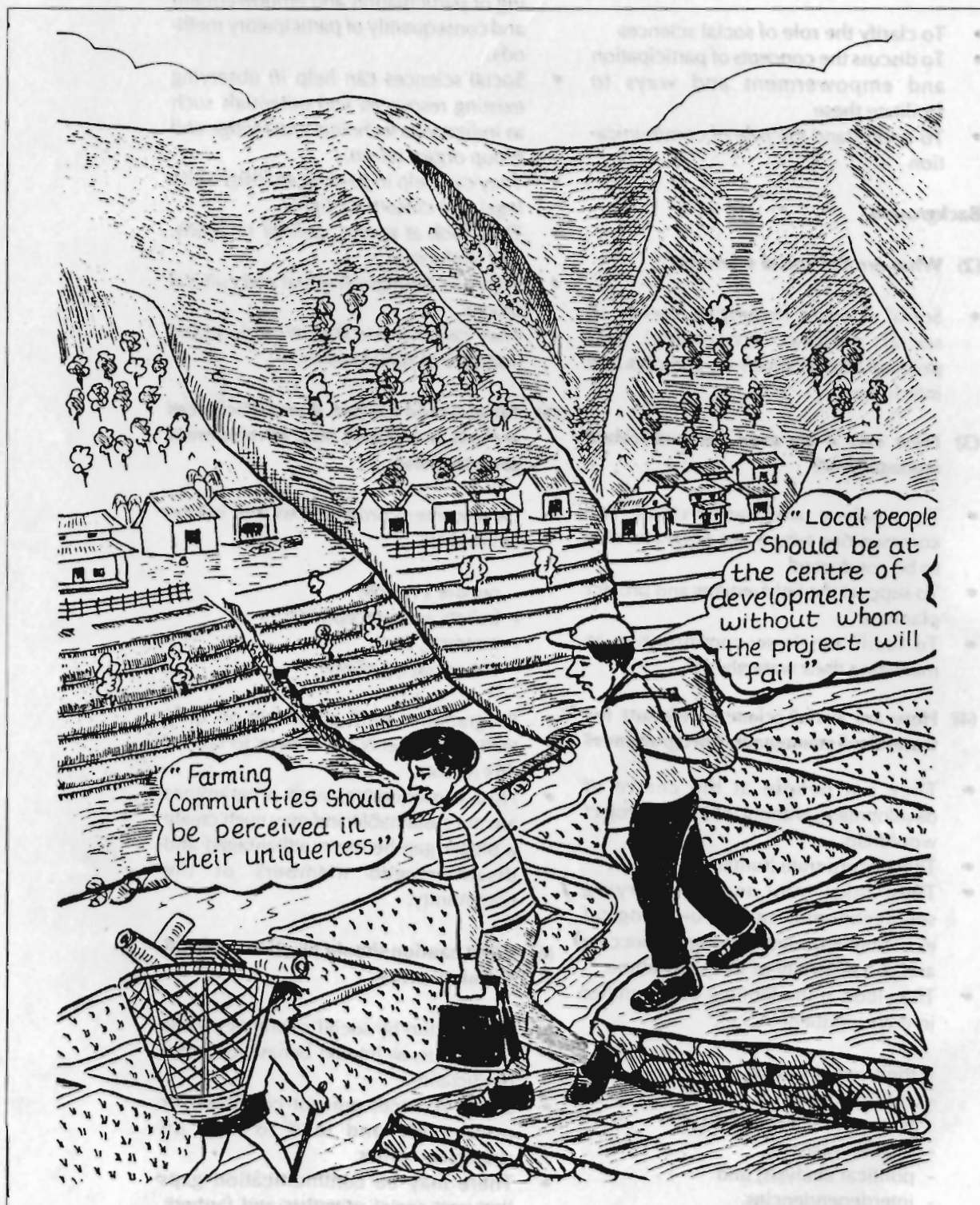
- Prescription by social scientists can be dangerous, as human behaviour is not predictable.
- Social sciences are not consistent or predictable and tend to lean on subjective values.
- There may be communication gaps between social scientists and farmers.

A good relationship with the farmers is required to develop confidence and trust which would result in fewer communication barriers.

- There may be communication gaps between social scientists and technicians.
- The social sciences can entail long-term (never-ending) studies.

#### (7) Focus and Scope of the Module

- Social profiling
- Participation and participatory methods
- Farmers' empowerment
- Communication
- Role of the facilitator



Knowing Local People in Their Own Setting

## MODULE 3.1

### SOCIAL PROFILING

#### (8) Objective of Module 3.1

- To understand the importance of the social sciences for farmer-led watershed management practices

#### (9) Inhabitants of watersheds are unique in their

- different endowments,
- social composition, and
- cultural practices.

#### (10) How can social issues be incorporated into watershed management programmes?

- By showing social sensitivity and awareness about the importance of social sciences
  - by employing socially sensitive staff and
  - by conducting social assessments to analyse the social situation of a watershed area.

#### (11) What is crucial for watershed management programmes?

- The need to understand the potential negative outcome of an intervention
  - To understand the risk-bearing capacity of the people
  - That programme activities may risk the loss of income
  - That they may require labour and thus an increase in workload
  - That there are risks associated with new technologies

#### (12) What does a social assessment include?

- The socioeconomic profile of community members, e.g., through a household survey, determine the socioeconomic status, interests, needs, and livelihoods of the people.

- The assessment of stakeholders (i.e., set of actors who have a stake in development), their interlinkages, relationships, and dependencies
- Social soundness analysis: to determine whether the poor, women, or other disadvantaged groups are participating
- Community profile: to understand the context of the community

#### (13) Why social assessment for watershed management programmes?

A socioeconomic profile is needed to understand the social composition of the community and the subsistence norms of community members.

- The assessment of stakeholders such as:
  - those who are members of the community;
  - the different government departments;
    - \* forestry,
    - \* agriculture, and
    - \* soil conservation;
  - NGOs
    - \* national,
    - \* regional, and
    - \* local;
  - cooperatives or workgroups;
  - industrial/commercial enterprises in the watershed or influencing the watershed.
- Social soundness analysis:
  - to determine whether there is an environment conducive to the participation of disadvantaged groups, i.e.,
    - \* do disadvantaged groups have access to land resources, e.g., water;

\* if they lack access they may not be very interested in conservation practices.

- Community profile:

- to understand who has access to what resources, e.g. water;
- extent of differential access, e.g., some members of the community may have better access to water than others;

- legal and customary rights, e.g., land titling laws and common property rights;
- indigenous knowledge, e.g., traditional sustainable agricultural practices, ethnic and religious affiliations and characteristics;
- social organisation, e.g., existing formal/informal organizations; and
- social structure, e.g., hierarchical society vs egalitarian society.



## MODULE 3.2

### PARTICIPATION

#### (14) Objectives of Module 3.2

- To understand what participation means and its importance for farmer-led IWM programmes

#### (15) What is participation?

- Participation can have different connotations
  - Often authors mention different degrees of participation.
  - Ultimately, it depends on the objective of the participation process and for whom it is intended.
- In this training module, participation is seen as active involvement of people at the grass roots in all aspects of IWM in order to empower marginal groups.
  - Participation should not be coerced or manipulated.
  - It involves a complex process (it is not easy).

#### (16) Why is participation important?

- Empirical research shows that participation in decision-making and implementation of a project is essential for sustainability<sup>1</sup>.
- Participation through participatory methods can uncover previously unheard voices.

- This can ensure the involvement of disadvantaged groups, provided they are able to participate.
- It provides knowledge of and confidence in local people, overriding orthodox imposition by outsiders and elite.
- It can lead to shared understanding.
- It can help in conflict resolution, even in complex and changing situations.
- It can provide people with ownership.
- This can result in the commitment of the community to its watershed management programme.

#### (17) Ten Basic Principles of a Participatory Approach to IWM<sup>2</sup>

- **Interdependencies and social change**
  - A WM programme does not work in isolation,
  - national and international policies and economic structures influence it.
  - Political back-up is needed for participation to be successful
  - so that people's suggestions are taken up and policies can be tailored to have people help themselves, e.g., decentralization.
- **Non-homogenous communities**
  - It is important to realise that communities are not homogenous.

<sup>1</sup> (Adolph, B., 1996. 'Linking Process to Impact: The Impact of Participatory Approaches to Soil and Water Conservation in Semi-arid South India'. Background paper for the regional workshop Sealing up Participatory Approaches to Watershed Management; Challenges and Opportunities. KVK (Deccan Development Society), Zahirabad, Medak District, Andhra Pradesh, Jan. 8,9,1996. University of Hohenheim/ICRISAT & Morss et. al. 1976 in Wapenaar, Roling van de Ban)

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from:  
Egil Magne Hovdenak. 'Participatory Action Research for Self-reliant Participatory Development' pp. 11, 12 & Dirk van Esbrouck, 'On Participatory Action Research', p. 12. In Cultures & Development-Quid Pro Quo, Journal of the South-North Network Cultures and Development, Vol 4, No. 12, Jan. 1993.  
Mayo & Chieuw, The Third Channel: Broadening Learning Horizons, Educational Division, New York : Programme Division, UNICEF

- There may be many differences between community members
  - \* socioeconomically,
  - \* culturally, or
  - \* politically.
- Participation can result in coercive and manipulative methods, especially if
  - \* the society is hierarchically structured,
  - \* participation may then become politicised, and
  - \* the unequal relationships will just be reinforced.
- **Self-reliance**
  - A self-sustaining watershed management programme benefiting the poor
    - \* should be based on people's own mobilisation of their own resources.
  - Giving things to people or doing things for them only creates dependency
  - It should be ensured that the community has ownership of the:
    - \* process,
    - \* content,
    - \* product, and
    - \* results.
- **IWM as a process**
  - This requires a process, rather than a project or single activity, and a multidisciplinary effort.
  - Rigid project plans with predetermined
    - \* objectives,
    - \* activities,
    - \* services, and
    - \* outputs will inhibit people's creativity.
  - Programmes need to be
    - \* integrated,
    - \* not isolated,
    - \* activities need to support one another, and
- \* new partnerships and teamwork are essential.
- **Facilitators**
  - A facilitator (who can be from the community) could serve as a catalyst.
  - The aptitudes and attitudes of the facilitator are crucial for the success of such an intervention (see communication).
  - Facilitators must be able to
    - \* interact and
    - \* build trust with the local people.
- **Participatory methods**
  - In order to introduce participatory WM it should be based on a thorough investigation and analysis of the socioeconomic relationships in a community.
    - \* Ideally this should be done with the community (see participatory methods).
    - \* This will both deepen the understanding of the facilitator (and gain solidarity) and nurture the skills of the people in investigating and analysing their own situation.
  - Through dialogue the facilitator can support the people's investigation of potential solutions to their problems.
- **Use of people's own resources**
  - The existing strengths of people and organizations should be built upon.
  - Everyone has something to contribute to development.
  - As far as possible people's
    - \* own group organisations,
    - \* knowledge,
    - \* technology,
    - \* culture, and
    - \* skills should be used.
  - These can be mobilised and/or revitalised.
  - Let grass roots' views and opinions be the starting point.
- **Activities**
  - People are able to identify problems and prioritise actions.



- New skills and knowledge may be developed through non-formal education or training.
- People should be treated as participators rather than passive objects.
- Participatory technological development involves people directly in
  - \* selection,
  - \* experimentation,
  - \* adaptation,
  - \* implementation, and
  - \* evaluation of new technologies.

#### • **Networking**

- Independent autonomous associations as isolated groups may find it difficult to sustain IWM,
  - \* especially if the watershed covers more than one community.
- Eventually they should ally themselves with like-minded groups.
- These groups can, for instance, engage in
  - \* farmer-to-farmer exchange,
  - \* learning from each other, and
  - \* strengthening each others' organization.

- The golden rule: Don't do anything for the people that they can't do themselves.

#### **(18) In what ways can participation be introduced?**

- The objective of participation must be clear.
- Know the culture of the community and managers' own assumptions.
- Create awareness of the problems and motivations.
- Identify common interests and common needs.
- Assure equal benefits, i.e., social, economical, ecological, etc.
- Look at gender issues.
- Strong political commitment, e.g., decentralisation
- Planning to be carried out by the farmers.

- Participatory monitoring and evaluation
- Transparency, accountability
- Interactive communication between all concerned
- Self-mobilisation, group formation
- Holistic, multidisciplinary approach
- Have a learning approach.
- Emphasise and build on farmers' own knowledge, skills, and indigenous methods.
- Work with local institutions.
- Use existing knowledge.

#### **(19) Participatory Methods**

There are numerous tools and methods which can be used to introduce and facilitate a participatory process through participatory learning and action.

- Development communication, using media and personal contacts
- Study tours, demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer exchange
- Training
- Exchange of ideas and experiences through discussions/meetings
- Contracts
- Beneficiary Assessment
- Rapid Rural Appraisal/Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Participatory assessment and planning
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation

#### **(20) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

- PRA exercises are well-known and used successfully in many participatory development programmes. PRA is:
  - a cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral technique,
  - aimed at engaging communities in social analysis of their own situation,
  - through interactive and participatory processes,
  - in order to formulate action plans together.

#### **(21) How can PRA be used?**

- By involving rural people in their own needs' assessment
- For problem identification and prioritisation
- To formulate action plans



**(22) What are the advantages of PRA?**

- It involves more people in a short time.
- It allows a group discussion to develop.
- It allows for different perspectives and views, everyone can contribute.
- It visualises people's situations.
- It allows for direct feedback.
- It allows for research results by the community and for the community, rather than only for the researcher.

**(23) What are the disadvantages of PRA?**

- It is only a tool and does not in itself guarantee participation.
- It needs a good facilitator/practitioner to facilitate the process so that everyone plays an equal part in discussions.
- It is difficult to involve the entire community (which is just too large a group), but smaller groups can be used.

**(24) What are the keys to PRA?**

- Local people are the key actors in the exercise.
  - They provide indigenous knowledge, perceptions, and
  - can serve as the initiators of participation in development.
- It is teamwork consisting of
  - local people and
  - teams from various disciplines.
- Flexibility is needed, as PRA does not follow any particular given structure. Techniques used depend upon:
  - size and skills of the team,
  - purpose, topic, and location of study, and
  - time and resources available.
- Validity: PRA gathers largely qualitative data and its validity is assumed by:

- triangulation (checking information from different sources) and
- cross-checking.

**(25) What is the role of experts in PRA?**

- PRA is a shared learning experience.
- Experts are in a facilitating role.
- Experts are not in control of the process.

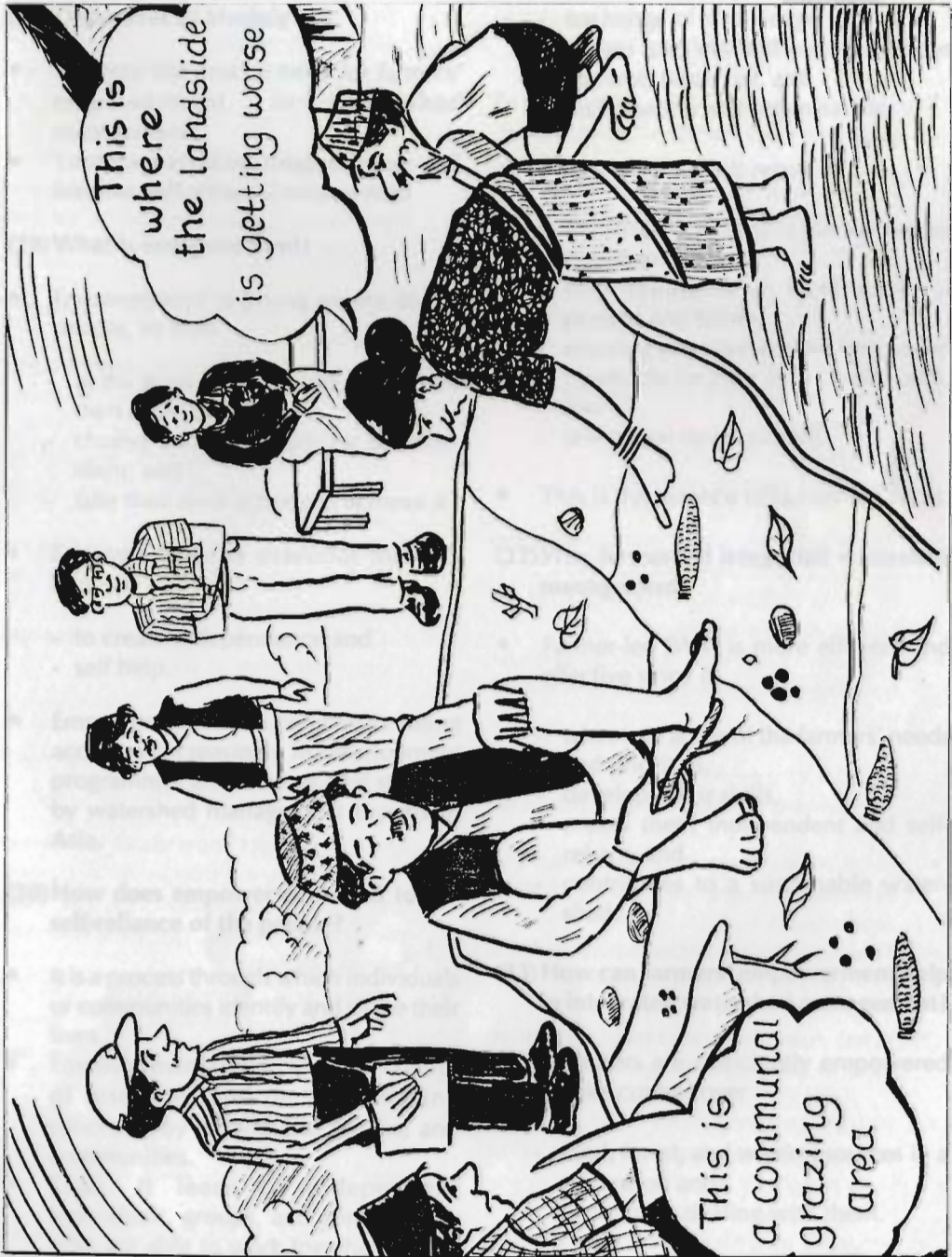
**(26) What are the PRA Techniques?**

- Transect walks
- Wealth ranking and well-being ranking
- Preference ranking
- Mapping and modelling.
- Seasonal calendars
- Historical profiles
- Social maps
- Venn diagrammes
- Daily routines and activity profiles

**(27) Is PRA a simple tool?**

- PRA uses simple techniques which are easily comprehensible by local people.
- PRA allows local people to use their own concepts and knowledge in describing the local situation.
- However, PRA exercises are not simple to facilitate.
  - Group discussions are complex interactions.
  - Each member assumes different roles.
  - There may be dependency relations between members influencing their decisions.
  - There may be cultural constraints preventing some members from speaking in public.
  - There may be dominating characters and shy, introvert members.
- Thus facilitators need special skills to be able to use PRA effectively.
- An important skill is communication.

Module 3.3  
FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT



Letting Farmers Take the Lead

## MODULE 3.3

### *FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT*

#### **(28) Objectives of Module 3.3**

- To show the crucial need for farmers' empowerment in watershed management
- To stress that disadvantaged groups will become self-reliant if empowered

#### **(29) What is empowerment?**

- Empowerment is giving power to the people, so that:
  - at the grass roots, people make their own decisions;
  - choose their own path for development; and
  - take their own actions to achieve it.
- Empowerment is essential for self-reliance
  - to create independence and
  - self help.
- Empowerment as a concept is being accepted increasingly in development programmes and is advocated strongly by watershed management experts in Asia.

#### **(30) How does empowerment lead to the self-reliance of the people?**

- It is a process through which individuals or communities identify and shape their lives.
- Empowerment should lead to a control of resources and decision-making processes by individuals, groups, and communities.
- Thus, it leads to independent individuals, groups, and communities who are able to work together for the good of all.

#### **(31) Why is empowerment crucial for watershed management ?**

- It allows people to organise and influence positive changes by:

- exchange of knowledge,
- access and control over resources (natural, financial), and
- mobilisation and organisation.

- Empowerment will result in:

- a qualitative change in present power equations,
- improvements in livelihoods – present and future,
- ensuring that interventions are chosen by people for their own chosen path, and
- self-reliant development.

- This is the essence of farmer-led IWM.

#### **(32) Why farmer-led integrated watershed management?**

- Farmer-led IWM is more efficient and effective since it:
  - takes into account the farmers' needs and priorities,
  - develops their skills,
  - makes them independent and self-reliant, and
  - contributes to a sustainable watershed.

#### **(33) How can farmers' empowerment help in integrated watershed management?**

- If farmers are sufficiently empowered to take control over
  - land, forest, and water resources in a watershed and
  - institutions dealing with them.
- Farmers in a watershed can work together for poverty alleviation through:
  - increasing productivity,
  - food security, and
  - management of natural resources.



- This requires a conducive environment and transparency
    - in the decision-making processes and
    - control over natural and financial resources.
  - Thus, a self-governing structure can be achieved in which farmers lead the process and manage their natural resources sustainably
- (34) Explain how the process of empowerment is a transformative one.**

- Local people are the starting point of any farmer-led IWM programme as they are involved in:
  - analysis of the situation (e.g., social assessment),
  - problem definition,
  - planning and decision-making processes,
  - implementation, and
  - monitoring and evaluation.
- This results in an increasing awareness among all parties involved.
- It allows farming communities to articulate their felt needs.
- Through coalition and consensus-building an action plan is formulated that is
  - location specific and
  - represents the most suitable practices.

- Local people then analyse activities and evaluate changes, formulating further action plans.
- This leads to a transformative process thus raising the social standing.

**(35) What role do government institutes have in the empowerment process?**

- Policy and regulatory reforms are necessary to ensure farmers' control over resources, e.g.,
  - land rights reform, so that farmers have a long-term interest in the land in order to implement conservation practices.
  - Often land ownership is not clearly defined and established in Asian upland watersheds.

- This is especially valid for indigenous people and for women.

- Government officials and other professionals in IWM are often not adequately equipped to facilitate an empowerment process.

- A complete reorientation of professionals' attitudes towards farmers is needed.
- A new understanding of participation is required.

- Government institutions and other bodies should shift their orientation from being target-oriented to farmer-oriented.

- Extension services on the demand of farmers
- Farmers' bank/funding mechanisms to provide rural credit without bureaucratic hassles
- Government policies should be reoriented to address farmers' needs and constraints
- Decentralisation of decision-making to allow farmers' decisions to be implemented
- Change attitudes towards farmers and consider them as partners

**(36) How do we motivate farmers to become involved in integrated watershed management?**

- Usually, farmers know about watershed management, environmental relations, and problems, though they use their own 'language' (i.e., not using scientific terms/concepts).
- Farmers will be interested in WM if it serves their own interests, e.g., a farmer losing his/her land from soil erosion will be interested in soil conservation.
- Sometimes farmers are constrained in WM because of several factors, e.g., legal and administrative matters, lack of capital, and so on.
- Often resources are available within the community, they may need to be revitalised or mobilised. Constraints may have to be removed. Farmers may need some training in skills needed for effective organization, which in turn



- will make them able to communicate with government bodies/bureaucracy.
- If they gain control over their own lives, through control over resources and decision-making, it would give farmers tremendous motivation and boost their self-confidence.
- If the programme will empower the farmers, they don't need to be motivated by outsiders. If their voice is heard, if they are listened to, they will be willing to involve themselves.

(37) Objectives of Module 3.4

- To understand the importance of communication for participation and empowerment and how the communication can be achieved effectively
- To know the appropriate media to be used for facilitation
- To know the communication skills needed to interact positively with farmers and create a participatory process
- Media can be used as a tool for:
  - training,
  - motivation,
  - provision of policies and information to the communities/ farmers.

(38) What is communication?

- Communication can be defined as an interactive information flow between sources in a two-way process.
- It is highly complex as each party has its own reasons for engaging in communication, its own perceptions, responses, selections, and perhaps even language.
- How effective is communication for integrated watershed management?
  - Communication is most effective between people of the same background (social, economical, cultural).
  - If this is lacking then at both parties have to increase their level of mutual understanding, for:
    - being open-minded,
    - showing sincere interest, and
    - sharing a common language.

(39) Why is communication important for integrated watershed management?

- Communication for participatory IWM must essentially be a two-way process.
  - The idea is that both professionals and farmers should be actively involved in:
    - \* formulating messages and
    - \* listening to each other's perspectives.
- Communication is essential for participation.
- The best communication method for this purpose is dialogue.
- It can provide an opportunity for:
  - collective analysis and discussion,
  - exchange of knowledge, and
  - horizontal exchange of ideas and opinions and skills.
- How can effective communication for integrated watershed management (IWM) be achieved?
  - Assessing the needs, goals, and capabilities of the audience
  - Responding to people's needs and interests
  - Getting to know the cultural conditions
  - Focusing on group discussions and in-depth interviews which help understand communication barriers, local knowledge, needs, and locally available resources
  - Speak their language by using both:
    - the local language, and
    - their concepts, terms, and references.
  - Relate to their everyday lives in a meaningful way.
    - by using traditional media;
    - by using their language; and
    - by giving meaningful examples from their daily lives.

## MODULE 3.4

### COMMUNICATION

#### (37) Objectives of Module 3.4

- To understand the importance of communication for participation and empowerment and how the communication can be achieved effectively
- To know the appropriate media to be used for facilitation
- To know the communication skills needed to effectively communicate with farmers and ensure a participatory process

#### (38) What is communication?

- Communication can be defined as an interactive information flow between sources in a two-way process.
- It is highly complex as each party has its own reasons for engaging in communication: its own perceptions, responses, selections, and perhaps even language.

#### (39) Why is communication important for integrated watershed management ?

- Communication for participatory IWM must essentially be a two-way process.
  - The idea is that both professionals and farmers should be actively involved in
    - \* formulating messages and
    - \* listening to each other's perspectives.
- Communication is essential for participation.
- The best communication method for this purpose is dialogue.
- It can provide an opportunity for:
  - collective analysis and discussion,
  - exchange of knowledge, and
  - horizontal exchange of ideas and opinions and skills.

- Media can be used as a tool for:

- training,
- mobilisation,
- generation of policies, and
- implementation by communities themselves.

#### (40) How effective is communication for integrated watershed management?

- Communication is most effective between people of the same background (social, economical, cultural).
- If this is lacking, one or both parties have to increase their level of mutual understanding, by:
  - being open-minded,
  - showing sincere interest, and
  - sharing a common language.

#### (41) How can effective communication for integrated watershed management (IWM) be achieved?

- Assessing the needs, goals, and capabilities of the audience
- Responding to people's needs and interests
- Getting to know the cultural conditions
- Focussing on group discussions and in-depth interviews which help understand communication barriers, local knowledge, needs, and locally available resources
- Speak their language by using both
  - the local language, and
  - their concepts, terms, and references.
- Relate to their everyday lives in a meaningful way.
  - by using traditional media;
  - by using their language; and
  - by giving meaningful examples from their daily lives.

**(42) CASE STUDY (An Example of the Importance of Communications)**

- Members of a farmers' organization received training in book-keeping.
- Two trainers conducted the course
  - one from an NGO, and
  - one from the government.
- Upon evaluation the participants commented that:
  - they learned more from the NGO trainer because he used concrete daily examples to which they could relate, whereas
  - the trainer from the government did not relate to their everyday lives.

**(43) Which media can be used for communication?**

- The media used must be conducive to a direct exchange of ideas.
- Mass media are less suitable for this, as they do not give direct feedback.

- The following table summarised various media, their advantages, and disadvantages.

**(44) What is critical when using media?**

- The key to effective communication is to consider the target audience.
- If communication materials are used, e.g., brochures, posters, and pictures, pretesting the material is essential as often local people will view pictures differently than intended by the artist.
- If engaging in a monologue:
  - people lose attention very fast because their span of attention is limited.
  - If using such a form, variations and a structure help.
  - However, for participatory purposes it would be better to let the audience participate actively taking it from a Monologue to a Dialogue.
- Group discussions are complex communication events

Media	Advantages	Limitations
<b>Single-audience media</b> Home/Farm visits, Meetings, Telephone, Letters, Demonstrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideal for establishing rapport</li> <li>- Useful in cultivating good public relations</li> <li>- Immediate feedback assured</li> <li>- Makes on the spot consultation possible</li> <li>- Response to problems or requests for assistance</li> <li>- Good opportunity for dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often the purpose of the talk, the knowledge and attitudes of each party is not well-known or considered</li> <li>- One may be intimidated by the other</li> </ul>
<b>Group media</b> Tape recordings, Video tapes, Slide shows, Photostories, Flip charts, Diagrams, Pictures, Presentations, (puppet) Theatre, Traditional media e.g., Paintings, Dance, Festivals, etc Group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideal for sharing knowledge and skills, problem-solving, coalition building and planning actions</li> <li>- Feedback may be gathered on the spot</li> <li>- Messages can be formed by all participating</li> <li>- Can facilitate dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some members may dominate</li> <li>- Some members may be intimidated into non-participation</li> <li>- Success is dependent to a large extent on the management and communication skills of the facilitator</li> </ul>
<b>Mass media</b> Print, Radio, Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideal for reaching a large number of people</li> <li>- Ideal for creating awareness and interest in new practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The audience is not well-known</li> <li>- No direct feedback</li> <li>- Concentrated in urban areas only</li> </ul>

- It depends on the roles people take,
- their social network, dependencies in relationships, personalities (dominant vs. shy), and culture of discussion (e.g., elders' talk).
- The size of the group is also very important.
  - The ideal size is between six to ten people.
  - However, often in community meetings you will have 20 participants.
  - This will make interactive communication more difficult.
- To be able to summarise the different given points of view
- Use of dialogue, creating an atmosphere conducive to an exchange of information.
  - Have everyone seated in a circle, so that everyone can see everyone.
  - Sitting instead of standing, emphasises the equal basis.
  - Give those sitting behind an equal chance to speak.

**(45) What communication skills are useful for farmer-led integrated watershed management?**

- Open-mindedness:
  - Willingness to listen to other people.
  - Willingness to accept different views other than your own.
- To have genuine respect
  - See people as equals.
  - Value people for what they are.
  - Recognise that people possess talents and potentials.
  - Be able to work with people on their terms, learn and assist.
- (Creating) Mutual understanding
- Listening skills
  - To be able to understand what should or should not be expressed verbally
  - To avoid interfering and give time to people to think and discuss
  - To avoid dominating and lecturing (see monologue)
- Know how to facilitate group discussions by
  - allowing shy people to speak,
  - moderating dominant people,
  - analysing the group process,
  - trying to get everyone's point of view,
  - posing the right questions to help the discussion without dominating or influencing the outcome,
  - assisting the group if they get stuck,
  - assisting them in coalition-building and action, and
  - managing the information, identifying key issues to come to a synthesis.
- Know and be familiar with group-based media for facilitation purposes
- Be familiar with the people, understanding them, know their level of knowledge, speak in their language
- Use interpersonal communication skills, talk to individual farmers on an equal level
- Recognise non-verbal communication
- Allow for feedback
- Be able to build relationships with farmers, gain their trust and confidence



## MODULE 3.5

### *THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR*

#### **(46) Objectives of Module 3.5**

- To understand the importance of the role of the facilitator in a participatory approach
- To learn the difficulties and skills needed to be a good facilitator

#### **(47) Why is the facilitator important in farmer-led integrated watershed management**

- His/her attitudes and aptitudes determine the success or failure of the programme.
- To be successful, the facilitator needs to have communication and managerial skills.

#### **(48) What is a facilitator?**

- One who gets to know the community through orientation into village culture.
- One who sets a conducive climate for discussion through:
  - mutual respect and two-way communication,
  - so that participants feel free to share their own experiences and knowledge and
  - feel free to express doubts and ask questions.
- One who provides clarity and guidance
  - so that everyone understands the purpose and what is expected of them.
- One who mobilises existing knowledge
- One who maintains flexibility
  - to meet the needs of the participants.
- One who moderates the discussion and
  - keeps the information exchange flowing by:

- \* keeping the discussion focussed,
- \* getting everybody's point of view.
- \* managing the information
- \* using appropriate body language,
- \* using friendly facial expressions,
- \* avoiding distracting hand and body movements,
- \* making eye contact,
- \* showing interest and reinforcing importance, and
- \* by using friendly gestures.

- One who avoids controlling the outcome
- One who lets farmers learn most by letting them make their own analyses and reach their own conclusions

#### **(49) Important attributes and skills of a good facilitator**

- Has experience in group work
- Has knowledge of local conditions
- Able to conduct non-directed learning
- Has organisational and management skills
- Fosters solidarity
- Knows his/her own assumptions
- Able to focus on competence of community members
- Becomes involved in all aspects of community life, but does not focus exclusively on the negative
- Has no success-failure pressure
- Has the openness to learn from mistakes
- Sees what works and what doesn't
- Spends nights in the villages to be around during the evenings and early mornings
- Asks him/herself who is being met and heard, what is being seen, where and why
- Questions what is seen, probes, seizes on, investigates
  - Six helpers can be used: who? what? where? when? why? how?
  - Asks open-ended questions

- Meets people in their own time, not rushing but not stretching discussions for too long
- Has second and third meetings and interviews with the same people
- Allows for unplanned time to wander around (e.g. for observation)

**(50) What will be the result of a good facilitator's work?**

- Paradoxically, if the facilitator has done a good job, the community will not attribute the accomplishments to him or her.
- Essentially, he/she is out to make him/herself redundant/obsolete.

**(51) Conclusion**

In what way is social science helpful in integrated watershed management:

- Social science investigates society in its social, cultural, economical, and political aspects; these aspects are complex and interlinked.
- Social science puts people at the centre of the development, looks at human behaviour, and takes into account varying socioeconomic and agro-ecological environments.
- It looks at farming communities with their uniqueness, their social systems, cultural norms, economic characteristics, gender relations, political analysis, and interdependencies.
- Social science helps to tailor development programmes to people's needs, beliefs, perceptions, and social situations. Programmes with an emphasis on only technical aspects are known to fail for this reason.

- It facilitates communication between farmers and technicians.
- It determines the risk-bearing capacity of the farmers, it assesses the potential negative outcome of an intervention.
- It stresses that programmes should be neither rigid nor have predetermined objectives, in order to facilitate people's participation.
- It puts people in the forefront for identifying problems, assessing needs, and setting priorities.
- It stresses on giving power to the people, so that, at the grass roots, people make their own decisions and choose their own paths for development.
- It stresses that if farmers are sufficiently empowered to take control over land, forests, and other resources, farmers in a watershed can work together for poverty alleviation by increasing productivity and managing natural resources.
- For farmers' control over resources, it is essential that government institutions introduce appropriate policy and regulatory reforms.
- To make farmers interested in watershed development programmes, it should be clearly reflected that these programmes are meant to serve farmers' interests. Farmers may need training to facilitate this process.
- This module also stresses the importance of a facilitator in the participatory approach to farmer-led IWM by creating a conducive environment in which farmers will be able to accomplish their objectives on their own, i.e., needs' assessment, problem identification, prioritisation, and deciding a course of action.

## Further Reading

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