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ROLE OF WOMEN

IN WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION SERVICES

A SOCIAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

IN TWO STATES OF INDIA: ORISSA AND RAJASTHAN

SPONSORED BY:

THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Sanitation Services (PROWWESS)

March, 1988

SOCIETY FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN ASIA (PRIA),
45, SAINIK FARM, KHANPUR, NEW DELHI 110 062, INDIA.

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PREFACE

Agencies dealing with the successful implementation of the rural water supply and sanitation services need to evolve the programmes in the context of the local requirement. In Indian rural context, water is a basic need and sanitation is a derived need, but both have cultural bearings. Because of the differential needs attributed to water and sanitation by the rural people, the expression of the needs are different. The differential expression does not undermine the requirement of one over the other.

Rural people are ready to adopt and manage both water and sanitation services in their own context. A project on water is adopted to redeem the water scarcity, and a project on sanitation services (toilets) is adopted to maintain privacy. Do we have any basis to challenge the validity of these reasons?

However, village communities and women can plan and manage their own programmes if they are encouraged to move from the point of their own reasoning to a collective understanding of the needs and local resources. This can be done through group formation, building local leadership, and collective education to develop alternative plans. This process can be harnessed by an agency which is committed to work among the communities and has a wholistic perspective of the community issues.

This monograph arrived at this understanding during a year long exercise of understanding the rural water and sanitation issues with village communities, women and NGOs in two states of India, Orissa and Rajasthan. The present study is sponsored by the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) under the scheme of Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Environmental Sanitation Services (PROWWESS). The present study is one of the series of studies commissioned in India by UNDP as a part of the preparation for providing rural communities in India with culturally acceptable, affordable and hygienic sanitation facilities. The purpose of the studies are:

(i) to identify community and water supply and sanitation institutional factors which bear on the effective implementation of rural sanitation programmes;

(ii) to promote the responsible involvement of community in the promotion, installation and maintenance of sanitary services;

(iii) to examine the social factors which facilitate or inhibit women's participation in the sanitary services;

(iv) to ensure follow-up in the village studies by linking up with appropriate local agencies, in particular NGOs concerned with sanitation and women's development.

Though the present exercise taken up by us (PRIA) is a part of the above broader concern, the primary objective of this study is to initiate a participatory process to assess social feasibility of water and sanitation services and to develop a methodology taking into account the experience of this process.

The active support of the NGOs, Gram Vikas in Orissa and the People's Education Development Organization (PEDO) in Rajasthan was not only helpful in pursuing the study, but their commitment to take up follow-up action has resolved many of our dilemmas while initiating the participatory feasibility process.

Special acknowledgement goes to Gram Vikas and the People's Education and Development Organization (PEDO) and the staff members who managed the process throughout. We would also like to record our thanks to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UNDP (PROWWESS) representative in New Delhi for providing us the opportunity and the support to undergo a learning process through this study.

Special thanks are due to all the villagers, particularly the women who have undemandingly accepted us with full trust. This report is the net result of the collective process of reflection and analysis undertaken by those rural women of Orissa and Rajasthan.

March, 1988.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Water supply and sanitation services are requirements of rural India. But traditional practices and community values give differential expression, importance and priority to these needs. In order to start a programme on this issue, the people's perception of the need has to be acknowledged.

The involvement of four communities, particularly the women of those communities, in the study in both Orissa and Rajasthan revealed that despite cultural and geographical differences people can come forward to plan their own priority needs - in this case sanitation - if it can be looked at as an integration with other priority needs. The integrated understanding of the issues is feasible if the process of group building, developing leadership, reflection and analysis is inbuilt in the planning process. In order to achieve success in involving people to plan their programmes, the issue needs to be addressed beyond economic terms.

Process

This report derived this understanding during a year long participatory investigation, analysis and reflection on the issue of water supply and sanitation services with the people of selected villages of Orissa and Rajasthan. However, the process emumerated in this report may be seen as a part of an ongoing participatory process. The involvement of the local NGO, Gram Vikas in Orissa, and the Peoples' Education and Development Organisation (PEDO) in Rajasthan, has not only provided the base support to the participatory process, but their commitment to take up follow-up action emerged as a consequence of the process, and has provided the confidence to pursue the process and resolve the inherent dilemmas. This is the reason why the selection of the areas for the exercise was done judiciously. Adhering to the principles of Participatory Research, the design of the study was evolved in a series of consultative meetings with the NGO animators and village activists .

The present study aimed to pursue the participatory process in three villages where the local NGO is working, and one village the NGO is not working in, both in Orissa and Rajasthan. The initial effort was to understand the community and the issues collectively. Analysis of the nature of the emerging issues and the level of participation was not only an educational experience for the research team, but also provided an opportunity to list the problems of the community and to assess the community strength to take up action on these issues.

Soon after this initial step, attempts were made to build capacity within the research team and among the village activists to understand the issue of water and sanitation more clearly. After spelling out the problems and identifying the available community resources and institutional support, the community was encouraged to develop their own feasible plan.

Perceptions

The process revealed that rural women perceive the problem of water more immediately than the issue of sanitation. Sanitation is perceived as a problem of lack of privacy. Defecation pollutes a person whereas water purifies a person. The kitchen is a pure place and the place for defecation is impure. This is the reason rural women prefer the water resource to be near to their homes, whereas the place of defecation should be away from the house.

Choice and Implementation of Schemes

The choice of adoption of services, particularly sanitation services, is dependent upon the homogenity of the community, the geographical situation, the women's past involvement in other developmental programmes, and community solidarity. Though the tribal villages of Orissa and Rajasthan are homogenous in nature, differences in habitat in terms of geophysical situation influenced the Orissa tribals to opt for community toilets, whereas the Rajasthan tribals opted for individual toilets. In the villages of Orissa, where there is a high level of community solidarity and past experience of womens' involvement in community development programmes, the villagers came up with their plans in a quicker and more systematic manner than in Rajasthan.

Though the women developed relevant software like their roles and responsibilities through a process of community education and by forming local institutional forums, the appropriate choice of hardware like toilet, sanitary pit and structure around the toilet, the place for the latrine and water will take time. It can be achieved if implementing agencies take up experiments with the support of the women. However, such an initiative will be hampered if the local community feels handicapped to develop any programmes for themselves. At the roadside villages, where there is no individual and community land for the toilet, the households do not feel encouraged to participate in the process, thinking that there is no solution to their problem. Women's involvement can be elicited if experimentation is done along with other developmental programmes. The experience also reveals that the participatory process is smoother and qualitatively better in the village where the NGO is already working.

Feasibility of a programme is not dependent upon the set of criteria related to the issues the programme intends to redeem. It is related to the whole set of issues that people come across in their day to day life. Therefore, in this context, the NGOs who are working among the communities on various issues should be encouraged to take up the process of feasibility assessment.

The key aspects of conducting a feasibility study established here is part of the process initiated during the period. The lessons emerged here are contextual.

The people who are going to utilise and benefit from a particular envisaged programme should be the central actors in determining its feasibility. The process of involving people in assessing the feasibility should not be mechanical. Rather, it should be an empowering experience. The efficacy of participation is dependent on the past experience and history of people's involvement in their own development. Therefore, sufficient attention needs to be paid to further the participatory process in areas where people do not have such a history. Moreover, the collectivization of local people in groups or organizations helps in pursuing the participatory process. In situations where such groups do not exist and where local leadership has not emerged, sufficient attention needs to be paid to build groups and encourage the emergence of capable leadership among them.

Information support on the issue under consideration provides meaningful orientation to the participatory process. If people, particularly women, do not have the scope of understanding various alternatives, and if they have not seen or heard of these alternatives, the capacity of their involvement in making appropriate decisions are restricted. The educational intervention should be integrated in the process in such a way that it effectively stimulates and encourages both the people and the researcher to seek alternative appropriate solutions to the issue at hand.

The resolution of rural water and sanitation is linked with various other issues like motivation, change in practice, availability of resources, software and hardware for alternative programme etc. Though the study is addressed only to women, since in the community they are not given full control of all the aspects, at the same time the entire community needs to be addresses, though women are the key actors in the process.

Participatory social feasibility study is not an apriori, time bound exercise. The needs and concerns, the demands and aspirations of the people in the process shapes the study process. The process can be meaningful if it is sustained till the arrival of a logical end ie. ensuring the follow up to materialise peoples' collective plan.

WOMEN IN WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROGRAMMES

A SOCIAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

BACKGROUND

In 1980 the General Assembly of the United Nations established the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) to promote the provision of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for all by the year 1990. The same year, the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women adopted a resolution that urged member states and UN agencies "to promote full participation of women in the planning, implementation and application of technology for water supply and sanitation projects".

As a result of these two initiatives, the need to involve women in water supply and sanitation programmes has received more attention and emphasis than before.

A vast amount of research work and field experiences in India clearly show that women are not given the opportunity to be involved in water and sanitation projects. The reasons for this are multiple:

(1) The community, particularly the women, are never involved in either assessing the need or in planning, designing, implementing, managing or evaluating the programmes.

(2)Women have a low degree of decision making power both in household matters and in matters concerning the community, and are rarely consulted.

(3)The actual needs of the community are not fully taken into consideration in the programmes. As a result, neither the programme assumptions nor the people's needs are met.

(4)The technology used in the programmes is some times so alien that the community makes use of the benefits of the programme mechanically and is not motivated to effectively maintain that technology.

(5)People's knowledge and local infrastructures are not taken into consideration in making choices for a programme. The technology does not comply with the community's need, attitudes and behaviour.

In programme services like water and sanitation, the actual users are women. The non-involvement of women in the needs assessment, choice of technology, and in the planning of the programme combined with the lack of recognition of women's knowledge, attitudes, values and behavioural practices, result in making the programmes mechanical. It is true that if the community has a specific need,thenthe solution is not merely an "appropriate programme". The appropriateness of a programme depends more on the process in which a programme is conceived and implemented rather than the technical sense of the word. Our experience of working closely with groups involved in various developmental programmes among communities shows that, given the opportunity, people can identify their problems on their own and can develop appropriate action plans to work towards a solution of those problems. With this basic premise, it was thought to initiate a process whereby the community, particularly the women, can be involved in analysing their problems related to the issue of water and sanitation and develop an action plan relevant for them. The effort,however, was not only to develop an appropriate action plan, but also to arrive towards the action plan in a systematic way. It is hoped that from the experience of the process, a methodology can be developed to ensure the participation of women in making water and sanitation programmes feasible.

This report is a detailed account of the problems related to water and sanitation and how the women were involved in the processof identifying the problems and developing an action plan. Moreover, this report also analyses the experiences and presents the emerging methods in social feasibility of water and sanitation programmes within the broader context of women's par ticipation. The methodological issues emerging from here are the results of a systematic practice.

This report is a presentation of the practice undertaken in four tribal and rural villages each in Orissa and Rajasthan. Effort has been made to highlight the conditions under which women contribute to the improved planning, functioning, utilization and maintenance of water supply and sanitation services and facili ties. The practice was carried on in both the states with the active involvement of local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working among the communities of both the States. In Orissa, the practice was taken up with the active participation of Gram Vikas in four villages of two blocks (Chikiti and Digapahandi) of the Berhampur sub-division of Ganjam district. In Rajasthan the study was supported by the People's Education and Development Organisation (PEDO) in four villages of Bichhivada block of

Dungarpur district. The support of the local NGO was sought to ensure continuation and follow-up, since we believe that in participatory practice people gradually take full control of the process and external researchers can only act as facilitators. Considering the limitations of time within the context of this exercise, we felt that it would not be ethical if our exit at the end of the targeted time jeopardised the participatory process initiated during the practice.

In both the States the study recognised the social,cultural and spatial dimensions. This particular study does not intend to overlook the technical aspects of water and sanitation, but very little breakthrough was achieved in this regard. The process of developing an action plan through community participation in general, and women's participation in particular, underwent many changes from the initial plan. While documenting the process, these changing trends were noted and both the experiences and trends have been comparatively analysed to develop an effective methodology and technique. The analytical framework developed in this exercise is not the only methodology for feasibility studies. The process clearly indicates that no guideline is prescriptive or absolute. The framework is based on a concrete process and hence, the methodology which emerged is contextual, but not a final judgement. Rather, it can be a starting point to stimulate further discussions among similar practitioners and participatory researchers to refine the methodological nuances so that in future it can be used in diverse contexts.

B. SETTING UP THE STUDY

Conventionally, feasibility studies try to assess and ascertain the factors and forces operating for the success of a programme or event. The indices of success of an event or programme are usually preconceived by the researchers on the basis of analysis of the existing information. The study findings are used as the ifinal input to determine or create developmental programmes. The models developed through this are regarded as blueprint models and the programme planners rely on feasibility factors and speculate on the success or failure of the programme. After the blueprint is prepared, then general intervention strategies are planned for action agencies. Alternately, agencies are asked to take up pilot projects in one or two areas using the prescribed method to learn from the intervention strategy by experimenta tion. Such a process treats people and society as objects, who are to be motivated or oriented, and accept the apriori indices of success as sacrosant. In this exercise the researcher emphasises the pecularity of the time and space ,the indices of suc cess remaining constant. As a consequence, conventional feasibility studies give the final judgement by studying the peculiarity of the time-space and other factors and matching them with the 'set' indices. The final analysis of a feasibility study remains only in the dichotomy of positive to negative,viz., feasible or not at all feasible.

The indices of success of a programme or event are often conceptualised in physical-instrumental terms. It is either adoption of a technology, response to a set of physical attributes, or acceptance of a set of rules and procedures etc. The feasibility becomes imperative when the above attributes are matched with the societal values and ethos, people's attitudes and utility to the society. Such a matching exercise is aprocessual in nature. It does not provide space for the society to reconstruct its needs, desires, values, attitudes and practices. In addition to the creation of a set scheme, the structure of the programme or event itself remains unquestioned. It is regarded as the ideal, unchanging model. This mechanical and infallible-unchangeable model of programmes/events have received many criticisms of late. More so, the realization of the potential of reconstruction of societal values and attitudes by any community has systematically questioned the mechanical-instrumental matching of programme indices with societal indices to determine feasibility. This concern has provided added impetus to participatory research methodology to determine the feasibility.

Assumptions and Dilemmas

The feasibility study undertaken for the present purpose, was conceptualised purely on the basis of the principles of participatory research. The first assumption was that the main concern in feasibility is not to establish any cause-effect linkage. The second assumption was not to merely carry out a research but to develop and facilitate a process whereby people will construct or reconstruct their own programme as feasible. The third assumption was not to look at the research as an outcome of a time frame study but to use the effort to make it part of an ongoing process of people's action.

These three assumption have helped us to pursue the process of ithe feasibility study. But it has posed many dilemmas before us. Firstly, developing the methodology for a feasibility study based on participatory research principles poses a dilemma between the primacy of the process of the study over the study findings. The second dilemma is between the primacy of the people's priority over the research priority. The resolution of these dilemmas were even more difficult because of the short time span of the study. It posed serious limitations in providing due emphasis to the pro cess of the study over the study findings itself. Moreover, the question of conducting a feasibility study was not the concern of the community. The development of a methodology is a purely academic concern. Executing a research primarily to satisfy an academic concern without combining it with societal problems in itself poses an ethical dilemma, the resolution of

which is not easy. However, the desire to systematise some of the principles for practical concern was used to resolve the dilemmas. The desire was not purely academic: rather it was to initiate a process within a larger context where the relevant information and experiences can be screened to understand the feasibility.

But in this conceptualisation the third dilemma arose. How far can an outsider initiate a participatory research practice and become involved in the process? At the beginning we were quite tentative in solving this dilemma. Our past experience of grass-roots involvement has given us the confidence that if people have a concern, then external support can help to build up criti cal knowledge and expedite the process of seeking solutions for that concern. This understanding of ours helped resolve the above three dilemmas for an interim period.

The study can then focus on an area where people have a priority over the issue which the study plans to take up. The study will not be a study by itself but part of the poeple's concern and their way of looking at the issue. In this context, the area of the study was selected.

Rajasthan and Orissa were chosen for the feasibility study since similar exercises were being undertaken by different groups in other states.

The operationalization of the study was carried out by matching the people's priority with the research priority. From our association and involvement with various field-based NGOs we had learnt that many groups are trying to tackle the issue of water and sanitation with the communities. It was thought that extending the efforts to in the study towards the efforts of the local groups would be mutually reinforcing. The short time study could help to build people's critical knowledge in resolving the issue. Moreover, the study can also develop a broader framework by acknowledging people's initiative, without which the study might not attain any breakthrough. Making the study a part of a larger context can perhaps transcend the limitations of time which are inherent in such an exercise.

The operationalization of the study thus began with the assumption of making the study a part of the initiatives and efforts of local people and groups. This operationalisation seemed in consonance with participatory research principles. The importance of acknowledging the ongoing efforts of the people is also a necessary step to reduce the outsider's control over the process.

Contacting Local Agents

In this context NGOs in both Rajasthan and Orissa were contacted who are taking up the issue of water and sanitation. Gram Vikas, an Orissa based NGO is working among the tribals of Kerandimal area in Ganjam district for the past ten years. Gram Vikas has been providing support to the tribals to organise themselves and to articulate their problems. During the last few years the communities have developed the potential to plan and manage many developmental activities on the issues of health, health education, community social forestry, primary education, land development etc. Presently, the community is interested in taking up the issue of water and sanitation. They are not only involved in the understanding of the problems but also in developing an appropriate and suitable plan.

Gram Vikas was also planning to undergo a process of assessment of the issue. This situation resolved our dilemma and clarified the strategy. Any research support to this micro situation, could be helpful in taking the people's initiative forward and also provide ways to understand and analyse the micro situation for macro questions. In the case of Orissa, the research objective was matched with the situation of the people. For the feasibility istudy, enough caution was taken to ensure the participation of the community, particularly women. This study has also a time span of just nine months. Withnthe framework of participatory research principles it is hard for any endeavour to complete a process in such a limited time. The process not only entail collective understanding of the problem but also includes analysis and evolving action plans. The involvement of the local NGO and their commitment to take up the process helped in evolving a way to deal with this constraint.

The situation in Rajasthan was different from Orissa. This does not mean that the issue under consideration was not a priority for the people of Rajasthan. The identification of a local initiative matching the present investigation took some time. However, this effort provided us enough methodological insight. Among the various groups working with the people of Rajasthan, ASTHA, a NGO, working among the tribals of Udaipur district was contacted first. ASTHA has been very active in mobilizing and motivating tribals on various socio-economic issues including the issue of safe-drinking water.

The local group has been involved in educating the community in health, safe drinking water management and in taking up measures to eradicate guineaworm infection by closing open tanks, and providing filters for drinking water. Besides this, they have been encouraging the communities to get organised so that collective action can be launched. Initially it was thought that involvement of the communities where ASTHA is working would perhaps be the right place to match the study objectives with the people's concern. But ASTHA did not feel comfortable with our suggestion of pursuing the feasibility study of water and sanitation. Their discomfort was genuine and understandable. Their experience of the communities showed that the issue of water and sanitation is not a priority and no effort has been taken yet to develop a socially feasible water and sanitation programme. They felt that if a socially feasible exercise was undertaken, their past experience might not directly contribute to the study. We respected the suggestion of ASTHA. Perhaps, our initiative was for a short time would not elicit any response when the community is not ready to take up the issue. Moreover, our intervention could have been very premature and we might not have been able to understand beyond the point of community participation.

The second organisation we contacted was the People's Education and Development Organisation (PEDO). The PEDO is working among the tribal village of Bichhivada block of Dungarpur district of Rajasthan. Along with various other developmental programmes, this group is providing water and sanitation services to the tribal villagers. They have been successful in organising women's groups in a few areas. Before taking up the water and sanitation scheme on a wider scale, this local NGO intended to involve the community in planning the programme. This situation was similar to that of Orissa.

The convergence of the research issue with the people's priority did not solve all the problems of starting the study. It only provided the basis to select the area to be covered under the study. But the question of eliciting community participation, nature and point of research intervention in the ongoing process of people's initiative and investigation, the support of the local group, selection of villages for intensive study etc., remained unanswered. To resolve all such concerns, an exploratory visit was made to both the NGOs in Rajasthan and Orissa. The basic reason for involving the NGOs in the study was that their experience of working among the people could provide more data about people's participation and initiative. One question arose at this point. When the universe of the study is determined by examining people's initiative and matching people's priority with the research priority, why depend on the local NGO to carry out the research process? The research process can be conducted and carried out by independent researchers. In conventional academic research, such practices are often carried out. The outside researcher keeps his anonymity and neutrality. The researcher's role is primarily to

collect information. There is no room left for the researcher to prepare the people to articulate their ideas, reality and dreams. For a feasibility study or a study of any social concern, the data may not be taken in a static, value neutral framework. Given the relevant input, the same people articulate their thinking in a perspective. If the research intends to provide the people's perspective, not researcher's perspective, a certain degree of animation is required. Added to this, information must be given to the people so that they develop critical understanding about their social reality. In this context, the NGOs are made partners of the study, so that they not only collect information but act as educators on the issue. Moreover, the NGO animators' ongoing involvement with the communities does not pose the problem of acceptability and rapport building. Their involvement does not give the impression that some experimentation is going on, as it is often seen in many conventional researches.

However, the involvement of the NGOs give rise to some issues. In Orissa, when a meeting was organised with the animators of the NGO to discuss their role as copartners of the research process, they raised a series of question. Two questions come up very forcefully:

(1) What was the need of taking up a feasibility study?

(2) How would the research process help in fulfilling the people's objective of preparing an action plan?

It was understood that the purpose was not to conduct a feasibility study, but to help build a process, where people themselves develop a feasible programme. The understanding of the process is relevant, because the process provides relevant information about feasibility which is not only important to the community who has undergone the process, but other similar communities who intend to undergo such a process. In this context, the research process is nothing but an exercise in documenting the people's action. However, as the researcher is not a mere witness of the process, but also an active participant, his role is to provide knowledge and information support so that the people's initiative is not thwarted by counter forces or factors. In this process, our role as well as the role of the NGOs was not essentially different, but could differ in terms of providing knowledge and information support. Such a process is often carried out by the NGO. But during the discussion they expressed that, they would like to also see the process. But there wee tensions among the members with regard to the probable consequences on the local efforts of external intervention. This tension became more apparent when it was mentioned that the process will only be carried out in some selected villagea. However, it was assured that the outsiders will not take control of the process. Only educational intervention will be made with due consultation with the villagers and NGO animators. About the concern of the universe of the study, it was made clear that the study did not intend to stop any process in other areas. It would only document the process in selected places. This classification provided relief but there was an expectation - could an action plan be prepared during the study? It was made clear that if one community achieves in preparing the action plan, it will be ideal for us, but we do not have control over the process, so it is better to keep the expectations low.

About the concern of the universe of the study, it was made clear that the study does not intend to stop any process in other areas, it will only document the process in selected places. This classification provided relief but there was a great expectation can an action plan be prepared during the study? It was made clear that if one community achieves in preparing the action plan it will be ideal for us, but we do not have control over the process, so it is better to keep the expectation low.

All the above questions were also mentioned during the meeting with the Rajasthan-based NGO. The other question that came from the Rajasthan group was: will the study help elicit participation? At the planning stage, it was very difficult to say yes or no.

The setting up of the feasibility study is not just selecting the universe of research study. It involves preparation of the agents for the study who are a part of the community. The tensions and issues are also different. In the case of Rajasthan, since the group is already involved in providing drinking water services and planning strategies for schemes with people's participation, they expected that this research will provide inputs for enhanced participation. Whereas the Orissa group was more concerned about the final action plan as they heve not yet developed any schemes on water and sanitation. The reasons for differential initial-expectations of the NGOs affected the process as they got involved in the study.

C: DESIGNING THE ENQUIRY

The villages being covered by both the NGOs, viz.Gram Vikas in Orissa and PEDO in Rajasthan, were thought to be the coverage for the feasibility study. Till this point, no design of the feasibility study had been prepared. The basic reasons for not preparing the blueprint design were:

(i) The study needs to be focussed as per the priority needs of the people and the working style of the NGo.

(ii)The mechanisms of community involvement and feasibility assessment are not in the control of the researcher.

Moreover the basic idea is to develop an understanding through a practice, hence any apriori control of factors might hamper the development of the process. This understanding provided the sociological insights to design the enquiry as per the demands of the situation and availability of research tools and resources in each situation.

The sociological understanding of the present issues, ie., water and environmental sanitation in rural India, provided areas of enquiry which needs to be addressed during thestudy. These are:

(a) Existing patterns of sanitation and water management. This includes the existing resources and practices related to water and sanitation, and the advantages and disadvantages therein; the community's concern, knowledge and attitude towards the issues.

(b) Women's role in the management of water and sanitation in the family and within the community. This includes how women perceive their role in water and the nature of the legitimacy they derive from the family and community in the planning of water and sanitation services.

(c)The potential of women in developing better water and sanitation services. This includes the women's understanding of their problems and their knowledge of the other services and the nature of support they would like to extend to develop a programme. if given a chance.

(d)The nature of women's involvement in building up alternative water and sanitation services vis-a-vis community participation. This presupposes an understanding of the nature of women's and community participation in other developmental programmes. and the ability of women to take up the issue in an organised way.

The above four areas need to be addressed not by a mechanical research design but by initiating a process whereby the women and the community can look into the issue. In other words, the design of the enquiry will be the designing of a process of practice.

Participatory Consultation to Design the Process

To design the practice process, a consultation meeting was organised both in Orissa and Rajasthan. The aim of this consultation was to recheck the matching of the people's concern with the research concerns, and to develop a plan whereby the community can be involved in the process of research and practice. As both the NGos are involved in many other developmental programmes and do not feel the urgency to look into these issues, the research team took the initiative. Given below are some excerpts from the diary of the team which might provide the background for convening the research consultation.

Rajasthan

The first consultation meeting was fixed with PEDO (Dist Dungarpur, Rajasthan) during the month of March 1987. It was intimated to the NGO that the understanding of the water and sanitation issues and the development of a plan should be discussed with the animators working in the area, alongwith the village level activists (men and women).

"Sticking to the original plan, we proceeded to Mada. However, before proceeding we faced many questions from our friends. They were concerned about the success of our visit. because it was very close to the festival of Holi, which is celebrated in Rajasthan with gusto. The breadwinners of the families, who migrate to distant places in search of jobs return to their villages to celebrate this festival with their families, amidst much joy and merry-making. It is indeed a very colourful and fantastic sight. Our friends felt that we would strike a discordant note by bringing up mundane topics amidst all this revelry. Throughout our way from Delhi to Mada we were in a dilemma: what right did we have really to compel people to suspend their joy and give priority to the mundane issues water and sanitation?

"From Dungarpur district headquarters to Mada is just 15km. We were going to the NGO office located in Mada in a jeep. The jeep was moving slowly. The traffic was regularly interrupted by the grazing cows, goats and sheeps. The whole landscape , as far as we could see from the road was barren. The hilllocks were completely bare and succesive drought had not allowed even a single blade of grass to grow. Suddenly our jeep came to a halt. One buffalo was not ready to give way to the jeep. Two women were standing a little away from the road to ensure that the animals did not graze on the small patches of grass which had been grown by the people by tapping underground water. Giggling, the women came down to the road to move the animal. But was not ready to be controlled by the women. It made its way to a small patch of crop, crossing the barbed fence.

"There were no traces of festivity on the faces of the women. Amdist the joy of Holi,the people had not suspended their sense of reality . Next morning, we saw a group of women entering the campus office . Suddenly Ramila Ben, who looks after the women's organisation, asked us to get ready for the meeting. On hearing this, we realised suddenly that our dilemma of whether we would spoil the festive spirit of the people by discussing the issues on hand were all misplaced, since they themselves were ready to start the discussions in spite of it being the festival of Holi".

Research as Education

The meeting was convened with eighteen women activists, who have been working in their respective villages in organizing women and taking up the health education campaign. Also present iwere five field-level animators, and the coordinator of the women's programme. The research team had never met these people. While introducing the research team, the coordinator of the women,s programme told the participants about the purpose of the meeting and why the research team was there.

The NGO was not interested in conducting any research. The objective was to prepare an action plan for water sanitation with the involvement of women in particular, and the community in general. The NGO is involved in providing services for drinking water. In this programme women have been encouraged to choose the spot of the water point to be tapped, and have been mobilised to learn about the management of water services. During the last three years of work,some village women had shown considerable interest in management of water points, particularly the maintenance of handpump and wells. Perhaps more education needs to be imparted so that the women and the community members understand the relevance of the issue and their involvement more clearly. It was also expressed that such an educational process will not only strengthen the involvement of women in the ongoing programme, but articulation of their question and concerns during this exercise might bring out new information and this can help in building up collective plans. It was also made clear that the research team will be also be involved in the educational exercise for a short time. The research team will

(i) Provide necessary educational input in support of the process.

(ii) Document the process in order to provide detailed information on the issues which emerge during the process.

(iii) Depending on the emerging issues and information, the research team will facilitate participatory intervention methods to develop action plans.

A number of issues were raised at the meeting , and their resolutions were arrived at collectively.

Q. 1. Why was such an exercise not carried out earlier and why was the outside research team extending its support now?

Ans. The answer to this question was arrived at by a discussion on the processes followed by earlier programmes. The discussion revealed that all the previous programmes were conceptualised by conducting a survey on the needs assessment. Once the needs were assessed. the issues were discussed with the people and the programme was conceptualised.

The research team pointed out that in our day to day lives we do some amount of research. However, we do not call it research and never feel confident that we are capable of doing research. But the documentation of our work strategies and processes presents no less insights than any research of this kind. The professional researcher might be using different language but in essence, the practice was the same. It was also clarified that external researchers are committed to look at the practice so that the ongoing experiences can be concretised and relevant educative lessons can be spelt out. The role of the PRIA research group was to systematize the process of collective enquiry and to derive lessons for future macro benefits.

Q. 2. How will the nature of the educational input and intervention strategies be defined? Are we capable of executing it?

Ans. It was agreed that no educational input will be decided apriori. The relevant issues emerging during the process will be discussed with the village activists and animators. Depending on the people's perception and understanding of the issue, educational materials will be prepared in such a way that it helps to sharpen the understanding. Also, it was stressed that the medium of learning will be prepared keeping in mind the level of the people. The intervention strategies will not be alien to the animators and activists. During the entire process, efforts will be made to pursue the process with local expertise and resources.

Q. 3. Why is the research team interested in facilitation for a short time period, and how can the team be confident that the study will be completed in the time frame?

Ans. This question was answered along the same lines as mentioned previously under the section of dilemma resolution. However, it was made clear that the process will never be under the control of the outside research team, and if in the future any need arose, then support will be extended beyond the targeted time.

(This committment is not a face saving device but an essential part of the role of the participatory research plan. A process does not end as per the desire of the researcher. Having ensured such a commitment, the area was selected for the study where the NGO is already working.)

Q. 4. If the effort is to build capacity within the community to develop and plan programme, is it possible to initiate the process in all the villages?

Ans. There is no harm in extending the initiative to the other villages. But since no one was confident in documenting the process in all the villages, it was collectively agreed that the village activists can initiate the process in their villages, but the external research team will pursue the educational process and documentation of strategies and women's involvement in selected villages only.

Orissa

It may be mentioned here that Gram Vikas, the Orissa-based NGO, had invited PRIA earlier to facilitate in developing a water and isanitation programme in the tribal and village area of Berhampur sub-division of Ganjam district of Orissa.

The field report of one of the research team reveals:

" The first round of visits and exposure to the field work of Gram Vikas had provided me enough insight. Their invitation to facilitate in planning the programme was a challenge and I felt confident. Prior to the consultation meeting we were confident that Gram Vikas will give priority to this issue and will take responsibility to execute the process".

The consultation meeting was attended by all the animators and programme coordinators. The NGO did not invite the village activists to this meeting. They thought that since the particular issue has been discussed at the village level, at this point there was no need to involve them. Gram Vikas made it clear that they are not only interested in developing an action plan but also wanted to systematize their understanding of the methods of intervention to develop action plans. However, to our dismay, some of the activists showed resistance to undertake a process to plan for water and sanitation programme. The reasons are perhaps two-fold:

(i) Some activists felt culturally inhibited to discuss the issue of sanitation with the villagers;

(ii) Some activists felt that unless we have funding for a programme we should not initiate any programme planning with the villagers;

Though the second point was resolved internally in the group, the first one remained a major hurdle in involving the activists. In both Rajasthan and Orissa the activists have shown cultural resistance to tackle the issue of sanitation. In Rajasthan, since the local NGO was already working on the issue of water, they did not give due importance to the issue of sanitation. Whereas in Orissa, the NGO animators accepted the importance of the issue of sanitation since they were already planning to work on this.

However, they felt uncomfortable about the fact that during the process they would have to survey sanitation facilities with the villagers. The concept of sanitation is very narrowly perceived as " facilities for defecation" and any work related to this is considered culturally inferior. Traditionally, the Harijans, who are the lower caste people, are involved in this kind of work. Even today this work is done by the Harijans. The activists felt that by being involved in work of this nature their social status might be affected.

Secondly, though both the groups in Rajasthan and Orissa are more interested in developing a plan of action, the Orissa group was clearer about their role in initiating a participatory planning process. Realizing the kind of involvement that would be needed to educate the people about sanitation, cultural inhibitions creeped into the minds of some of the activists. Since such cultural inhibitions among activists can only be resolved through an educational process, it was realised that a greater educational emphasis had to be placed in developing the feasibility.

The Study Design:

Though the concerns and questions are different in both Orissa and Rajasthan the study design developed was broadly the same for both the states.

(1) Understanding the issues through participatory observation and collection of data on the water and sanitation services, and people's attitudes, values and practices.

(2) Identifying broad issues.

(3) Developing knowledge and skills among NGO animators and village activists on the issues of water and sanitation.

(4) Helping villagers/women to articulate and systematize the causes related to the issue by providing educational input.

(5) Facilitating the villagers to develop participatory action plans.

As a first step to operationalize the enquiry for the feasibility study, a set of villages were identified. This exercise was conducted during the consultation meeting. In both Orissa and Rajasthan collective eforts have been made to take up typical rural-tribal villages which can represent the average rural-tribal areas of these states. An exercise was undertaken to describe the characteristics of tribal and rural villages in these areas. This exercise revealed that barring a few general characteristics such as settlement patterns in terms of caste composition, caste specific values, rituals, beliefs and practices, each village is distinctive in itself. The villages are distinctive in terms of the number of caste groups in the village, size, land holding patterns, educational level, prevalance of community assets and other welfare/developmental facilities, links with the urban economy and degree of self-sufficiency, communication network, demographic parameters, etc.

However, no sociological analysis was done to link up different variables, because this might divert the purpose of designing the ienquiry. The different caste groups not only practice different rituals and share different values but also exercise their rights differently over the community assets. For example the higher caste groups use different water resources for drinking and other household purposess. Though all the caste groups use the community pond and river, the upper and lower castes have assigned places for bathing etc.

It is interesting to note that in both Orissa and Rajasthan in the villages, the settlement patterns, values, rituals and practices are caste specific. Different caste groups dwell in the same village. Though the settlement is compact, each caste group has its own distinctive boundary separate from the other caste groups. The upper castes live in the prime area of the village, whereas the service castes like barbers and washermen live away from the upper castes. The Harijans live distinctively away from the settlements of the other caste groups. This distinction is the same in both the states,because the Indian rural caste groups draw their status in terms of the hierarchy of castes based on the Vedic division. Each caste group is assigned its position in the hierarchy by the Vedic prescription of practices of rituals.

The upper castes (derived from the Verna system of Brahmin, Kshtriya and Vaisya) are considered more pure (each caste makes itself distinctive by practices to establish its hierarchy) than the service caste (Sudras). The untouchables are not part of the Verna system and are considered the impure caste.

Though the caste specific values are followed, with the introduction of education, and laws to abolish untouchability, the rigidity of these values and practices are reducing.

In both Orissa and Rajasthan, the characterization of tribal villages was undertaken not in terms of the tribal community as a whole but in terms of the tribe living in the area being studied. In Orissa the characterization was undertaken with reference to the tribes of the Kerandimal area. The tribal villages are a homogeneous group without any hierarchy. The villages are compact but smaller in size. Their economy is dependent on the forest. The tribal villages are distinctively away from the caste villages. However, the distinctiveness and relative isolation is reducing with the influence of urban economy, culture, education etc. The tribals of this area are known as Konds.

The tribal villages of Rajasthan are different from the Konds of Kerandimal. The Bhils of Bichhwada block of Dungarpur district of Rajasthan are a homogeneous group and maintain isolation from the caste villages. However, the tribal households do not dwell at one place. Each household builds its own hut on the top of a hill. In a family when the boy gets married, he shifts to another hill top. In terms of dwellings, though they maintain nuclear families, there is solidarity within the clan. The Bhils of Rajasthan are also being influenced by the urban economy, education and other state developmental prgrammes.

This preliminary understanding helped in preparing the criteria to select a set of villages which not only reflect the ideal typical village but also reflect the variety. The criteria prepared for both Orissa and Rajasthan are given in Chart 1.

It is interesting to note that while the animators in the Orissa-based NGO identified the differential priority of people on the issues of water and sanitation as a specific indicator for the choice of villages, the activists and animators of Rajasthan did not specify this. However, all other indicators are same. The reasons of differential weightage to the criterion of priority to the people have been analysed comparatively. The Orissa group of NGO animators was clear about launching a programme to understand the factors associated to water and sanitation, whereas the Rajasthan group of animators was planning to tackle the issue indirectly. The Rajasthan group was of the opinion that since the they are already involved in extension services for drinking water and sanitation in selected villages, a specific planning process might build up expectations among the people to extend programmes. It was difficult at this point to understand how valid this fear was, but it was clear that the context and the objective of the action will determine the strategy for investigation.

CHART 1 CRITERIA TO SELECT VILLAGES

Orissa

(i) Villages with differential sizes

(ii) Villages with different composition and dwelling patterns (topography)

(iii) Differential educational levels

(iv) Differential demographic status, remoteness/accessibility

(iv) Differential demographic status, remoteness/accessibility

(v) Differential community assets and access to developmental welfare programmes

(vi)Differential priority to the issues of water and sanitation

Rajasthan

(i) Villages with differential dwelling patterns

(ii) Differential composition, size, density, topography

(iii) Differential educational patterns

(iv) Differential demographic status, remoteness/accessibility

(v) Differential community assets and access to developmental welfare programmes

Secondly, the people involved in the identification of criteria in both Orissa and Rajasthan were different. The Rajasthan group included the village activists and NGO animators whereas the Orissa group comprised of only NGO animators. Perhaps the village activists of Rajasthan presumed the existence of the problem in an uniform way, whereas the NGO animators of Orissa stressed the differential priority of water and sanitation, keeping in mind the development of a strategy for differential villages with idifferential problems.

While identifying the criteria, both the groups agreed to take up villages where they were already working. This specification reduced the choice of taking up a rural caste village, since both the NGOs in Orissa and Rajasthan are working only in tribal villages. But in order to understand the physical factors related to water and sanitation programme planning, as well as the process of community involvement in the programme planning, one caste village (where the NGO is not working) was suggested by the research team . The suggestion was given keeping in mind two points: first, the process which they go through to elicit people's involvement can be different in the caste village; secondly, in a new village the process will have to start from scratch, whereas some ground has already been covered in the villages where the NGO is already working. However, a methodolgical dilemma still persisted. Can the participatory research process undertaken in the caste village be abandoned after the study period? The answer is certainly no.

The village profiles prepared by the NGOs and the demographic figures presented in the census report were also referred to in selecting the villages. The selected villages and relative differences of criteria are given in Chart 2 and 3 for both Orissa and Rajasthan.

At the end of the consultation meetings in both the areas a collective exercise was undertaken to tentatively outline the time frame, design and key responsibilities. The exercises are given in Chart 4.

CHART 2: PROFILE OF SELECTED VILLAGES - ORISSA

CRITERIA Name of the village	Size	Composition	Dwelling Pattern	Topography & accessibility	Community assets	Educational level	Priority need to water and & sanitation (as expressed by animators)
TAMANA	70 families	Tribal homogeneous	Compact	Below the hill forest, near to the puckka road	Pond, tube wells, Community hall Community social forest	Low	High
MARAIBADI	60 families	Tribal homogeneous	Compact with bunching of hutments	Plain area 3 km away from the main road	Pond, tube well, primary school, Community Social Forest	Very low	Low
VIKASPUR	80 families	Tribal homogeneous	Compact resettled colony	Plain area, remote, not connected with road	Tube well	Very low	High
MEDINIPUR	230 families	Caste village Hetrogeneous	Compact	Plain area close to the main road	Pond, tube well, community hall, school, social forest	Moderately low	Very high
RAMAGUDA	65 families	Tribal homogeneous	Compact	Below the hill forest, remote no road connection	Pond, tube wells, social forest.	Very low	Low
DHAMANAPADAR	48 families	Tribal homogeneous	Scattered few families have been rehabilitated as they are displaced by dams	Near the hill side	Tube well	Very low	Low

CHART 3: PROFILE OF SELECTED VILLAGES - RAJASTHAN

CRITERIA Name of the village	Size	Composition	Dwelling pattern	Topography & accessibility	Community assets	Educational level
KANVA	256 families	Composite caste village with tribal dwelling	Caste village is compact, the tribal dwelling is scattered	Caste village is in plain where as tribal dwelling is in hill tops (on the road side)	Hand pump, hospital school & inter-college	Caste village the educational level is high. In tribal dwelling it is low
MODER	180 families	Composite - caste + tribes (70 % tribals)	Scattered	Hilly area (5 km away from the nearest bus stop	Hand pump, school	Low
TALEYA	222 families	Composite caste + 60 % tribal population	Scattered	Hilly area (12 km away from the nearest bus stop	Hand pump, school, hospital	Low
CHUNDABADA	584 families	Composite with 70 % tribal population	Compact main village with scattered tribal hutments	Plain area with small hill tops (close to road)	Hand pump, school, hospital	Not very low
NAUALSHYAM	420 families	Composite caste village	Compact	Plain area linked with the main road with kuchha road	Hand pump, school	Moderate
PAL GANDI	80 families	Tribal	Scattered	Hilly area remote	Hand pump	Very low

CHART 4.

TENTATIVE DESIGN OF THE ENQUIRY - STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN BOTH ORISSA AND RAJASTHAN

Orissa

March - Visit to the selected villages - meeting with the villagers (Research team and NGO animators)

April - Appraisal of the village situation

April - Building capability among the NGO animators to initiate the process, (special importance on how to conduct Participatory Investigation)

May) Village meetings

June) Family visits

July) To collect data on water and sanitation

July - Analysis of information collected

August) - Preparation of educational material and community education

August) - Educational exercise continued and assessment of Sept. change in attitude and knowledge

October - Village meetings to plan programmes, taking stock of the educational experience and collective understanding of the situation

Rajasthan

March - Visit to the selected villages - meeting with the villagers (Research team and NGO animators)

April - Appraisal of the village situation

April - Building capacity among the NGO animators to initiate the process (special importance on community and women's participation)

May > Needs assessment and priority and collection

June > - of information on water and sanitation

July >

July - Review of the process

Augsut - Educational exercise on water and sanitation

August> - Educational exercise continued, and assessment of education

Sept. > change in attitude and knowledge

October - Village meetings to plan programmes

Both the groups reiterated that they do not use any sophisticated tools or aids in group facilitation processes in their work. They made it clear that the methods of investigation and enquiry and facilitation should be discussed in detail. They were apprehensive that the presence of outsiders with sophisticated research tools will create unnecessary anxiety and expectations among the people.

D. UNFOLDING THE PROCESS:1 UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

Adhering to the time frame developed collectively for the enquiry, the six identified villages were visited along with the NGO animators in both Orissa and Rajasthan. The basic purpose of this visit was for entry into the villages and to collect primary information about the social, cultural, spatial and economic aspects. The other objective was to match the priority needs perceived by the animators with the priority needs of the villagers, both spoken and unspoken, in Orissa. In Rajasthan, the objective was to assess the potential of community/women to participate in the process of investigation and planning.

The visits were conducted in the evening. This is the time when people return from work. Since the NGO animators had been working in these villages, there was no entry problem. At the time of entry, no attempts were made to reveal the objective of the visit. The visit followed the same pattern as the animators' visits. However, the field note of the researchers reveals that the acceptance by the villagers of the outsiders was not immediate. The researcher's capacity to cope with the local situation helps in the entry process.

Another field note reveals:

Rajasthan, Talevan: *"It was noon. I was going to the village with an animator.and was feeling uncomfortable. Every two minutes my companion was stopped by the passersby on the road and taken aside. During our seven kilometer walk from Moder to Taleyan, he must have spent at least an hour talking to about fifteen people. Meanwhile, I was standing looking at the hilly terrain. I finally lost my patience and asked him what were the people discussing with him so secretively? Very hesitantly he said that the people were asking about me. Then he asked why I did I not reciprocate to the people's greetings? It was only now that I realised that the people had been greeting both of us and my lack of response amde them anxious, confirming their suspicion that I was an outsider. We moved on. I now started greeting the people on the road, and began to feel comfortable again."*

Another field note from Orissa says:

Village Tamana: *"It issatisfying to work among the people. However, it makes a vast difference if you know the local language, and in this case I had the advantage of knowing Oriya, which is the local language. When we entered this village I was first introduced to Masterji, who works in a Government office. Because he is the most educated person in the village, people call him masterji which means teacher in Oriya. Masterji took me from house to house. I was the guest of the village. They asked me all sorts of questions, ranging from the general to intensely personal ones. Their lack of inhibitions made me lose my self-conciousness."*

During the visit effort was made to talk to as many people as possible. Certain questions like what were the major problems people faced in the village, what did they feel about these problems, how do they tackle community issues, how do they organise community festivals, etc., were asked.

After the initial visit the NGO animators and the research team sat together to appraise the village situation and to further develop strategies to initiate the process.

Rajasthan

Out of the six villages visited in Rajasthan, two villages were dropped from the study because they posed some serious concerns. The context is as follows:

The village Naulshyam is a caste Hindu village. The local NGO does not work directly in this village. Only a few poor households were extended some services to deepen their wells. During the visit, some home visits were made and people were also contacted near the school, the village pond etc. Most of the upper caste men work outside the village in Government or private concerns. Those who work closeby come back home every evening. Others who work further away come home on weekends. The upper caste women do not work in offices etc., but they do all the household work and also help out in agricultural work when necessary. However, they strictly practice the Purdah system. About ten percent of the households belong to the scheduled tribe and three percent belong to the scheduled caste. The scheduled caste women do not observe strict Purdah.

The high caste men raised high demands during our visit. They treated the research team and the local NGO animators as some governmental officials. They asked us a straight question: "Do you have any programmes for our village?". Others asked: "Why will you provide loans?". None of the male members were interested in looking at the collective issues of the community. A group of men protested ,"Your agencies only provide loan to the tribals and Harijans. Hhy don't you provide us loans also?". Despite all our efforts to convince people to look at the common issues and the benefits of developing community plan collectively, no one was ready to shift from their individual problems. When we asked them to talk to the the women about the collective issues, they laughed saying, "What can they do? What do they know?".

Another field note reveals:

"We were talking to the Anganwadi teacher and the local hospital doctor about the health condition of the children in the village. An elderly man called us to his house. He was very hospitable. and served us tea, prepared by his wife. I requested her to join our discussions. As she was about to sit, her husband quickly asked her. "Don't you have any work inside?". The woman immediately got up and went back inside the house.

The head of the household then politely asked us the purpose of our visit. We told him that we had come to discuss whether the community in general and women in particular could come together to plan some developmental programmes for the village. He immediately listed a series of problems, starting from the need to develop fishery in the pond to maintenance of roads, shortage of drinking water and general hygiene problems. He also said that if you have any project you are most welcome. We added that we did not have any projects, and these could only be developed collectively. We also mentioned that we will help them to get a government programme if they wanted. Suddenly he lost interest. He then asked, "Which government department do you belong to ?" When said that we did not belong to any government department, he lost interst completely. After this, our efforts to call other people to discuss the issues were all in vain."

During the appraisal meeting, the NGO animators raised serious doubts about whether we could successfully initiate any process in this village. They felt that it would be difficult to develop a collective consciousness within the targeted period. Moreover, the high caste groups did not want to be associated with any of the tribal or schedule caste groups. Another constraint was that the men were not ready to consider the women involvemnt of the women in the process. These tendencies are socially inbuilt.

Looking at the magnitude of the problem and our discomfort in tackling the issues on our own,without any active support from the community members, the idea of including Naulshyam in the study was dropped.

The other village was Pal Gamdi, a small tribal village. The tribal hutments here are dispersed over a large area. The local NGo is working in this village. This village has been severely affected by drought. Men and women go to distant villages and the town nearby (Dungarpar) in search of work. The little land the tribals hold are barren. There is no irrigation facility to develop any crop in the village. The water-borne parasite, the guineaworm has infected most of the people. The infection is particularly severe among the children. The local NGO, with the help of doctors, has been running open clinics to tackle this problem through clinical surgery. Besides this, they are also involved in educational campaigns for guineaworm eradication. The NGO is also providing extension services like closure of open tanks and supply of water filters to break the cycle of guinea worm contamination.

This seemed to be an appropriate place to take up the study, since there was already some ground prepared on community involvement in developmental programmes. However, the animators of the NGo based in this village said that during the day there is no one in the village except the children. The men and women leave the village at dawn and return late in the evening or sometimes even after a day or two. They cook at night and leave isome for the next day for the children. Sometimes they came back to village without any wages. But the people here were very cooperative and participated in full strength in community activities. They had a strong sense of community feeling and helped each other when and as necessary. Besides the problem of absence of the villagers, there was also the question of their losing their daily wages during if they were asked to stay back for meetings on any particular day. In view of all this we felt that it would not be appropriate to take up this village for the study.

We realised that even though people are interested,the situation is such that it would be practically impossible to get the villagers together to discuss their problems. There was some hesitation in dropping this village, but we made it clear that as soon as the situation improved, the process can be taken up, even if it did not fit into the time frame of the study.

In the other four villages no such constraints existed as in the two above. The research team felt confident of eliciting participation and were eager to begin the process, even though the local NGO was not working in village Kanwa.The profiles of the villages prepared by the animators and the research team are as follows:



← ORISSA

LIVING IN HARMONY





RAJASTHAN →

Village Profiles:

Kanwa

The village Kanwa is just 17 km. away from the district head quarters at Dungarpur. The village is on the Dungarpur-Ahmedabad main road. The road divides the village into two. The high caste people live in compact areas on both sides of the road. The tribals live away from the village in a scattered settlement over the hill tops. Some of the hill tops are like huge dunes.

The total population of the village is about two thousand consisting of 256 families. Out of this about 12 percent are schedule caste and 30 percent are schedule tribes. In the village 25 percent of the people are literate (35% men and 14% women). The literacy rate is very low among the schedule caste and schedule tribes. The village has two primary schools, one middle school and one higher secondary school. But the schedule caste and schedule tribe parents do not send their children to school. The upper caste parents do not send their daughters to school.

The village has a total area of 670 hectares. Out of this. 55 hectares are irrigated. 302 hectares are unirrigated and fallow land. 117 hectares are cultivable waste and 166 hectares are not available for cultivation. In spite of this being a hilly region there is no land covered under forest.

The upper caste men are involved in cultivation. jobs in the government and private concern. and household industry. About 80 percent of the upper caste women are not involved in any iformal production process. The schedule caste and schedule tribe men work as agricultural labours (mostly part time) and other daily wage work. Most of the schedule caste and schedule tribe women are daily wage workers.

The local NGO has been working among the schedule tribe population of this village. The tribal cluster has its own identity and is called "Vedavada" . But this name is not in any of the revenue records and census reports. The tribal women have formed a Mahila Mandal. The Mandal has set up a weaving centre.

The members have been trained through the local NGO and are now involved in weaving activities. which are now generating substantial income to the tribal households. Besides the income generating programmes, the women are planning to develop knowledge and skills for community health care, education .social forestry etc.

These organizational efforts of the tribal women have had an influence on the caste women of the main village.

The health status of the village is very poor. The doctors of the village Ayurvedic hospital said that 80 percent of the children are anaemic because of the low nutritional status. Malaria is also highly prevalent. The other major diseases are diarrhoea. T.B. athritis, amoebic dysentry. The high prevalence of malaria reflects the sanitary conditions of the village.

The main caste settlement is occupied by Brahmins, Jains and Patels. In one corner of the village live the schedule caste families . Though the upper caste houses are well constructed with brick and cement, only six families have toilets. The drains of the houses flow out to the lanes of village. The handpumps do not have any drainage system. The waste water around the handpumps keep the surroundings perpetually damp. As the tribal huts are on the hills, no waste water gets collected near the house there.

The caste households are concerned about the unhygienic conditionof the village. But they have not yet made any effort to take up any community action. However, during the visit two men and one women took the initiative to talk to the people about the village problems.

Chaundavada

The village Chaundavada is located 33 km. away from Dungarpur and five km. from Bichhiwada Block on the side the Udaipur-Ahmedabad national highway. The village has 600 families with a population of about 4000. Seventy percent of the population are tribals and five percent are schedule castes. In the entire village 10 percent of the population is literate. The literacy rate is two to three percent, in spite of having school facilities till the high school level.

The village has a total land area of 2625 hectares. Out of this 46 hectares are irrigated. 1305 hectares are unirrigated and fallow land. 429 hectares are cultivable waste and 359 hectares are not available few cultivation. About 400 hectares are covered under highly denuded forest. The occupation of the people has a similar pattern to that of the Kanwa village.

The village is divided into different clusters called Phalas. The tribal households are scattered in 9 Phalas, whereas the high caste have settled in just two Phalas. The tribal women have been organising to make a Mahila Mandal so that they can take up a similar activity to that of the Vedavada women. However,they are also interested in developing the community health care services and post-natal care for lactating mothers.

The village has several personal and community wells. But due to successive drought, despite deepening of wells, there is a shortage of water. Seven handpumps cater to the drinking water needs of the village. Tap water is also supplied to a few houses, which comes from a pond outside the village. The pond water is highly contaminated as people bath in the pond as well as use the water for washing etc. The water from the pond is directly lifted to a centralised tank. In the absence of any filtering capacity, only bleaching powder is put into the tank for decontamination . The sanitary conditions are similar to that of Kanwa village. The major health problems of this village are also malaria, anaemia among children, diarrhoea, typhoid, T.B. etc.

As the village is close to the panchayat and the Sarpanch of the panchayat belongs to this village, some of the block development programmes have been extended here. However, no effort has been made by the block officials to promote people's participation while implementing the programmes. During our visit many women showed interest in developng community action programmes. These women had actively participated in one of the Mahila Melas organised by the local NGO. Many men from the upper caste also showed concern for the backwardness of the village. They clearly said that, given some support, they would like to do some work for the development of the village.

Moder:

The village Moder is five km., west of the village Chundavada. There is no bus from Chundavada to Moder. The hilly terrain of the Aravali range makes the route from Chundavada to Moder very difficult. The village is surrounded by high mountains. Though the main village is located in the valley, most of the tribal population lives on the hill tops of the range. About two hundred families with a population of 1200 live in this village. Seventy percent of the population are tribal and the remaining belong to the high castes. About 30 percent of the population are literate. The literacy rate among the tribal men is 10 percent and almost nil among the women. The village has one primary school.

The tribal village are is 436 hectres. Out of it 23 hectres are irrigated, 170 hectres are unirrigated including the follow land, 87 hectres are cultivable waste and 156 hectres are not available ifor cultivation. Though the village does not have any forest land, most of the tribal family have developed forest on their private plots. The tribal families mostly grow teak trees. These teak trees are only economic asset for them. They sell the teak logs in the market as the trees get old. Though most of the Hindu caste families are involved in agriculture only 30 % of the tribals are involved in full time cultivation. Majority of the tribals men and women even do not get 200 days of work in a year to earn their daily wages.

The village is mainly depend on river flowing close to the village for all types of water need. During the summer the river gets dried up. The whole village uses the little water that gets stored in the ditches at the river bed. As the same stagnant water is used over a time of four to five months regularly, it gets highly contaminated. Besides the river, few tubewells and the private and community open wells are used for drinking water purposes. As most of the tribal families live in the top of the hill they always have to climb down around half a kilometer to fetch the water. None of the tube wells recently installed by the local NGO is managed and maintained by the community members.

Diarrhoea and malaria are the chronic diseases in the village. There is no health facility available in the village. The nutritional status of the village is very poor. Most of the children are anaemic. Due to the initiative of the local NGO, the tribal women are getting organised to take up some developmental programmes. However, as simply getting organised does not bring them any economic benefit and the male counterpart does not appreciate the effort. The local women reveal that most of the tribal men go out for work and they spend a large part of their income in alcohol. In this context women are always in look out for some work nearer to their house so that they can look after the household and substitute household economy.

Talayan

The village Talayan is further seven kilometers away (westward) from village Moder. The village is located on 500 meter higher in altitude than village Moder. About 230 families live in this village with a population of around 1500. 60 % of the population belongs toscheduled tribes and 5 % belongs to Scheduled Caste. As the whole village is based on the mountain range even the Hindu caste families do not form cluster living. Whole of the village is dispersed over an area of about 800 hectres. The population density of the village is very low. One house to the other house is about 200 to 300 metres away. The agricultural land is just around the house. The slope of the hills are converted to household forests and the valley area is used for cultivation by making . Due to the successive droughts, the family forest was completely destroyed. The major crops people cultivate are rise and maize. No land is under irrigation. About quarter of the total land is not available for cultivation.

In the whole village about 8 % of the population are literate. The literacy rate almost nil among the tribal women and about 5 % among the tribal men. The village has one primary school and one middle level school. Visualizing the remoteness of the village and low level of literacy. The tribal Development epartment of Government of Rajasthan has opened a middle level residential school in this village. The tribal students from nearby villages are taking admission in this school. However, there is no residential facility for tribal girls in the school.

The village has one Homeopathic hospital. However, very few people go to the hospital unless there is some emergency.

The village water need is catered through few private and community wells and hand pumps. Due to the successive drought there is shortage of water in the community wells. The primary wish of every family is to have a deep well near to the house so that they can have access to water sources for agriculture and household purposes. Under the IRDP programme of Government of Rajasthan almost every household has applied for loan for deepening of well and funds for contour banding to save the agricultural land from rapid si But majority of people are denied as they are not found eligible either of an earlier outstanding loan or they do not come under the category of poor. It seems that the whole village is leading an subsistence living. As wage is a problem and there is no net input from agriculture towards the economy, the male members are migrating to nearest towns, Udaipur, Dungarpur, Ahmedabad etc.

The village women ar planning to take up few income generating programmes. As a first step to their initiative the local NGO has trained few women on construction of smokeless chulha.

Rajasthan

Collective Appraisal of The Field Situation:

Strategy for The Future

The experience of the pilot field units made along with the animators of NGO was systematised collectively to spell out the village issues, potential of participation and future strategies for participatory investigation of dimension and nature of village level issues.

The two villages Naulshyam and Pal Gamdi were temporarily suspended from the study. In the village Naulshyam, the obstacles to participation were so high that it was thought that during the study period it might not be possible to achieve the objectives set for the process. This was not to ignore the reality. In this village the power relationship between the dominant upper caste and subordinate tribals are sharply defined. The dominant group has developed a dependancy on government resources and do not see the possibilities of collective effort for community development. A brief educational campaign might not contribute towards a viable "take off" point towards community participation. In the second village, ie., Pal Gamdi, the problems of basic survival were so acute that it was not possible for the community members to interact among one another to develop long term plans.

Eliciting participation in the above two villages would have been very challenging. An intervention strategy could have provided new information for the general understanding of the participatory process. But the question was whether the researcher and the NGO animators could meet the expectations of the people, within the framework of the prevailing social dynamics in the community in Naulshyam. In Pal Gamdi, the basic problem was the economic conditions in the village.

The specific problems of the other four villages were diverse. However, the issues were similar. Since the local NGO is already working in these villages and the community and the women are somewhat aware of the issues, all the members of the team felt confident about eliciting participation. The basis of this confidence was not related to ensuring participation, but being able to manage the emerging dynamics during the process of intervention.

The basic socio-economic issues of the four villages were primarily three: health, education and wages. The community does not have any control over these issues. The reasons are never clearly examined. Moreover, the local human resources are not mobilised to seek alternative solutions. Hence, it was collectively agreed that, in the coming months, interested persons will be identified and the participatory understanding of the issue will be carried out with the other villagers, particulary the women. Once the women collectively understand the general issues, special input will be provided on the issues of water and sanitation.

ORISSA

All the six villages mentioned earlier were visited with the NGO animators and programme coordinators. In all of the villages the local NGO (Gram Vikas) is working with the people on developmental programmes, except in Medinipur. During the visit the key village people who are taking active interest in the community developmental programmes and those who have the potential to be involved in the developmental programmes were contacted. The identification of key people in the villages was easy since the NGO animators knew the villagers and their potentials. Activities such as village meetings and planning for new developmental programmes familiar to the villagers except for Medinipur. With the support of Gram Vikas all the five tribal villages have developed their community health service scheme, savings, social forestry, non-formal primary education, etc.

Two villages were dropped from the list of six villages in Orissa, as was in Rajasthan. The two villages were Ramguda and Dhamanapadar. The reasons of dropping these two villages were different. Ramguda is a small tribal village with population with 48 households and a population of 300. The village is physically isolated from the peasant villages, and is three kilometers away from the Berhampur - Chikiti road. The villagers hold very small pieces of land. The net produce from these is barely enough for four months of food requirement. The villagers are mainly dependent on the forest for their living. Both men and women go to the nearest forest to collect fuelwood and other minor forest goods. These people do not sell the collected minor forest goods directly in the market. The traders from nearby caste villages come to the tribal village and buy the forest goods at a lower price.

Few years back the village as a whole was indebted to the local moneylenders and liquor merchants. With the help of Gram Vikas, the villagers have escaped the clutches of local moneylenders and liquor merchants. During the last few years the villagers have formed a village committee, in which all the villagers are members. This has not only provided collective strength but have also enabled them to take direct action in opposing the local exploitative forces.

However, during our visit, the situation was slightly changed. A few of the male members of the village had fallen under the influence of local exploitative vested interests. The local liquor merchant had opened a liquor shop in the village, with the support of some of the tribals. This raised serious concern among other villagers. On this issue the whole village was divided into two. Some concerned villagers, along with the Gram Vikas animators, were working to resolve the issue. Since the need for a resolution of this problem and maintaining unity in the village was urgent, the NGO animators and village activists felt that the issue of water and sanitation may be taken up a few months later.

Damanapadur is a similar type of village as that of Ramguda. On the first visit itself, the villagers clearly mentioned that water and sanitation is not an emerging issue in their village. However, the water and sanitation conditions in the village did not seem satisfactory to the researchers. The NGO animators felt since the people in the village were not interested, then the participatory intervention exercise might be taken up after gaining the experiences in other villages in this issue.

The other four villages were taken up for the study. The profile of the villages are as follows:

Tamana

Village Tamana is just 16 km away from the nearest town Berhampur, on the Berhampur -Chikiti road. The entire village is inhabited by 70 Kond families with a population of 400. The village is isolated from other caste villages. Despite the presence of a large caste village at the other end of the village, across the road, the tribal villagers of Tamana maintain a social distance from the caste village. The settlement of the village spreads over foot hills of Kerandimals (the local hill range).

All the seventy households are settled in five straight rows. Each row consists of twelve to twenty five houses with common walls. The houses face each other. Both at the front and back of the row there are open spaces. The animals are kept at the front of the house, and this space is also used by the family for other activities.

Each household has built a mud platform in front of the house. Under the platform the grains are stored, away from mice, fire, and rain, until the monsoons. During the early monsoon, sometimes the tribal families are not able to earn anything. At this time the stored grain is used. During the summer months the mud platform is used as a bench to sit on as well as for sleeping at night.

Each house has two rooms. The front room is used as a store room-cum-living room. The inner room is used for cooking , dining and for storing of few household goods. All cleaning and washing of utensils. clothes etc are done either close to the water source or at one end of the row.

Tamana village has a very low literacy rate. There is no school in the village. In the entire village only a few men know how to read and write. Not a single woman is literate. However, during last few years of initiative taken up by the local NGO, Gram Vikas, the villagers have developed a critical understanding of their situation. They have a moderate understanding of government development programmes. They are also aware of their rights. A year back.the villagers had demanded the revenue department to sanction legal papers against their land holdings, which they have not received since the land was allotted to them during the land settlement. Along with the understanding of their own rights, the villagers have kept their traditions intact. The field note reveals:

Tamana. March: "It was evening. The sun was setting under the hills of Kerandimal. The village was bathed with the reflections of twilight. The cattle was returning to the village after grazing in the hilly forest throughout the day. The returning mass of cows. made the road dusty. The dust rose to the top of the trees and houses. Against the twilight. the rising dust made the village look serene. The women at home putting green twigs into their chulas in order to make asmoke screen to drive away the mosquitos. But the main concern was to look after the needs of the cattle.

Lights were not yet lit in the village. In the middle row of the village a group of young boys were lighting a lamp on an earthern pot. They stood around the lamp and sang a prayer. Finishing the prayer. they asked for the "mridangam", a type of drum and some other local musical instruments and started walking around the village, beating their drums and siging prayers. During the walk around the village. each household gave some rice to them.

This is the ritual every evening. The prayers are sung to bring peace to the village. The rice they collect everyday is stored in the community hall. Every year during summer the village holds a community festival. The total expenses incurred are met by selling the rice collected".

The villagers live in harmony not only amongst themselves, but with nature and God. The village has a headman. He is not only the clan head but also guides people on personal problems . In Tamana, the village head is unlike any Kond tribal head. He is educated and has been taking keen interest in bringing all the tribals of the region together on various social issues.

Most of the families have small landholdings. The crops produced from the land are mainly rice and bajra. The produced crop is just enough for two - three months supply. Both men and women go out to work. They either go as agricultural daily wage labourers, or go to the forest to collect sal leaves, fuelwood or bamboo and other minor forest goods. They either sell the collected forest goods directly to the market or to middlemen. The collection of goods takes up the whole day. When there is no money in the house to buy the food requirements of the family, they sell the collected forest produce on the same day to the middlemen. Otherwise, the next day they take it to the nearest Berhampur town market to sell. They are aware that the middleman gives a much lower price compared to the market.

For the past three years, with the support of Gram Vikas, the whole village has been engaged in community social forestry. Presently they are planting and rearing the trees. They plan to market all the produce from this on their own. The women of the village have also formed groups and they have full control over the social forestry programme.

There is no hospital in the village. The common health problems in the village are malaria, anaemia, and nutrition deficiency and diarrhoea among children etc. Despite the community health education and services provided by Gram Vikas, the village has not been able to start primary health care programmes on their own.

The village has two tubewells (handpumps) and two open wells. The tubewells were installed just two years back by the Block Development Office. Since then, the open wells are not used. No one even maintains these wells. During last two years wild grass has grown around the well. This gives a clear indication that noone has come to fetch water for some months. The tubewell (handpump) is installed at one end of the village. All water for drinking and cooking purposes is taken from these two tubewells. While the women fill water in their earthern pots, some of the villagers also bathe near the tubewell. Sometimes, some of the bath water falls into the women's pots, and when this is noticed, then an altercation ensues and the pots are refilled. Since there is no proper drainage system the waste water gets collected near the handpump. One of the villagers has planted a few banana trees around the handpump.

No household has any latrine facilities. Everybody goes out to the fields and jungles. Water from the nearby pond is used for cleaning up after defecation. The children usually defecate close to the houses, and this is later thrown in the backyards. the women always change their clothes after defecation, but this practice is not followed by anyone else.

During the evening, women are busy cooking and attending to household chores. This is the only time they get to do the household work. By eight o' clock in the evening they finish all the work and feed the members of the house. After that, if they have the energy, they sit on the verandah with their smaller children, chatting with other women. The houses are arranged in such a way that they can talk to their neighbours sitting on their own verandahs. The village has built up a tradition of sitting together in the evenings to discuss village issues. In these meetings both men and women sit together. However, women always take the back seat at these meetings. Women talk less in front of men. There is no social distancing as such, but the women feel that men have a better understanding of the issues. This feeling is reinforced when the men do not allow the women to give their points of view.

Maraibadi:

Maraibadi is a similar tribal village as that of Tamana. This village is more remote. However, the settlement patterns and occupations are similar to that of Tamana. Sixty families live in this village which has apopulation of about 300. The literacy level is lower than Tamana. Though the government has opened a one-room primary school in the village, it does not function as there is no teacher in the school. Gram Vikas has trained a local boy to teach the tribal children. The tribal boys and girls come to school in the evening. The health records of the last few years which have been maintained by Gram Vikas animators show that Maraibadi has a high infant mortality rate and diseases like, malaria, jaundice, typhoid, anaemia, diarrhoea and high malnutrition among children, exist in the village.

The village has formed both village committees and women's groups. These have been involved in social forestry programmes, non-formal primary education, health education etc. But in terms of their own initiative and leadership, they are yet to achieve the standards set by the Tamana villagers.

About 50 percent of the families are small landholders. the produce from the land is barely enough for six months subsistence. As a consequence, the whole village is dependent on the forest for their living. Early morning both men and women go to the forest to collect bamboo, fuelwood, and fruits. They come back home by afternoon. On the way back, the men bathe in the streams or pond. The women come back home and bathe in the nearby pond or tubewell. While going for a bath, the women also take along the dishes and clothes for washing. The first meal of the day is cooked in the evening.

The villagers collect drinking water from the handpump. The state of the open well is the same as that of Tamana. The bathing and cleaning is done mostly in the pond. The sanitary practices are also similar to that of Tamana.

Vikaspur:

Vikaspur is a resettlement tribal colony developed with the support of Gram Vikas. This colony is just two years old. Earlier the Kond tribes of this village were living in the mountains. They were completely dependant on the forest for their livelihood. But the tribal villages were not able to retain their isolation and self-sufficiency which is one of their basic charesteristic. Local moneylenders and petty businessmen ruined the self-sufficient forest economy by introducing liquor and consumer goods, and slowly the isolated tribals fell into the hands of moneylenders and petty businessmen who acted as middlemen buying the forest goods at a very low price. Visualizing the rapid deterioration of these tribal communities, Gram Vikas resettled them on the plains in the foothills of the mountain.

The houses are built in the same style as other tribal villages. The tribals are being organised so that they have full control

over their economy and are able to stay away from the local exploitative forces. Presently the literacy rate is nil.

Eighty families are living here at present, and within a year some fifty odd families will be joining them. The tribal people of Vikaspur have yet to develop their own alternative feasible economic structure, habits and habitat. After coming down to the plains, the tribal youth have developed typical urban tastes. They would prefer to join some sector of urban economy rather than depending upon the forest for their livelihood. The youth of the village have collected some money to start a music band party and to be hired to play at the marriage functions in the city. But such a step is disliked by the older generation. These villagers own a few acres of land which has been provided by Gram Vikas. They are at present developing community horticulture on this land.

The community conducts regular meetings to plan out collective strategies for a better living. As three different communities are now living together, they are finding it difficult to unite. Even the issues and interests differ in terms of old residents and new residents in the resettlement colony. This new village does not have access to health services and education. The village has just one handpump which cater to the household drinking and cooking needs. As the women have to go to work by eight o´ clock in the morning, they start collecting water very early (4 o´ clock in the morning). Despite this women have to wait fifteen to twenty minutes at the tubewells to collect water. Because of the scarcity of water, the villagers use the water stored in a pond, constructed under the minor irrigation project for washing and bathing.

All the villagers, except the children, go to the forest which is close to the minor irrigation project for defecation. Although the forest provides enough privacy for defecation, the women face problems when they go to the pond to clean themselves since this is a common area used by everybody for washing up afterwards.

Medinipur:

The village Medinipur is a caste village. Two hundred and thirty families of different caste groups live in this village. The main village has a high population density. The village is divided in to three clusters. The main cluster is on the roadside. The high caste groups live in this cluster. At the righthand corner of the main cluster,lives the service caste (washermen, agricultural artisans, barbers). Little further back live the Harijans (schedule caste). Most of the high caste people are engaged in agriculture. Except the Brahmin caste women, all other

women also work in agriculture. The service caste people cater to the upper caste people of Medinipur and many other adjacent villages. In return of the services, they recieve some grains once a year. This relationship is popularly known as the 'jajmani' system. The Harijans are mostly engaged in daily wage labour.

Forty percent of the upper caste people are literate. Some of them also hold college degrees and work in white collar jobs. The educational level is very low among women in all caste groups and low for everybody in the lower caste groups.

Though outwardly the villages seem to exist harmoniously with each other, in reality this is not so. The villagers have developed a degree of apathy for community issues like drinking water, health, education, hygiene and sanitation etc.The Harijans and service caste people have their own water resources. They do not use the well and handpumps of the higher castes.

The higher castes who live at the side of the road face a lot of difficulties in finding a place for defecation. During the moonsoon, when the crops come up in the fields, there is no other place left for the people to defecate except the roadside. This poses problems for the women because there is no privacy. Most of the people take a small pot of water from home to clean themselves afterwards. But continous defecation at the roadside makes the place filthy and insanitary. The Harijans and the service caste people go further away, near the pond, for defecation. In general, the water and sanitation conditions in the village are highly unhygienic.

Strategies for the Future:

The village Ramguda and Dhamanpur wre dropped from the participatory research cum feasibility study process. Ramguda was dropped because of the emergence of community problems, whereas Dhamanpur was dropped because the villagers were not prepared to look at the issues. The case of Dhamanpur is similar to that of the area in Rajasthan where ASTHA is working.

However, in all the other four villages water and sanitation was an issue. In all the four villages the degree of community participation varied. Besides the issue of water and sanitation the villages have other different problems. Among the villages, the three tribal villages had more or less the same problems, with reference to their social status - homogeinity, economic position, etc. These tribals are being organised with the help of Gram Vikas, so they have had the experience of examining community issues. But the caste village is different. In this village, the interest is varied according to the caste needs. The upper caste men are more individualistic, and the village does not have a history of collectivizing community issues. In this context it was thought that the issue of water and sanitation would not be taken in isolation, but the community will be motivated to look at the problems in a wholistic way and then plan appropriate action for the specific issues. During the visit, village level activists were identified who would then carry out all further action. At this meeting the NGO animators were hesitant about pursuing the process in the caste village. It was thought that since the issue of sanitation was acute amongst the caste villagers, perhaps they could be involved in the process through regular meetings. However, efforts were to be made to include the other castes in these meetings.

E. UNFOLDING THE PROCESS:II - PEDAGOGY OF THE RESEARCHER

It is no secret that the understanding generated by the research team along with NGo animators and village level activists has provided information about the communities, which is not at all sufficient to prescribe action plans for community development programmes. A considerable amount of information which is with the community and the research team needs to be systematised. In fact, before starting the process with the community, a participatory strategy can be developed. In both Orissa and Rajasthan, all the members who were to be engaged formally in the process were concerned about the 'participatory process', and the involvement of women, in both the contexts. It was therefore necessary to address ourselves to the question of "participation" and the "participatory process". To resolve these issues, a two day training workshop was organised for the key members of the field research team in both Orissa and Rajasthan, which included the NGo animators and village level activists. The objective of the workshop was to understand what a participatory process means in community developmental work, with particular reference to women.

The agenda of the workshop was prepared in informal consultation with the NGO animators. (The agenda is given in Chart 5.) Our past experience of involvement in different participatory processes was used as a basis to moderate in the consultation process. In this context it was found that the first thing which needs to be highlighted is the potential resources of rural poor for furthering the process of development. Conventionally, the rural poor is considered an obstacle in the sense that people's attitudes and values lag behind developmental values. Hence, the developmental experts mobilise rural poor through mass education and mobilization. However, such an understanding and practice does not involve people. To facilitate a participatory process it is necessary to make the people realise the importance of their culture values and social practices, and simultaneously help them to develop a critical understanding of their micro reality. This not only entails the understanding of the various social issues but also the interlinkages. To pursue this exercise, the researcher needs to be sensitive to the values, practices and attitudes of the people, and give value to their their existing knowledge . This can be only done in a collective way. But in the process, the people should not develop any dependancy on the facilitators. Alongwith an understanding of the situation, it is necessary to identify the factors for lack of access to resources for development, and the dominant powers which thwart people's action and interest. It is also important to remove dependency and despair that prevails over the marginalized, and to develop a viable forum so that people can represent their interests.

Chart 5: Agenda of the Workshop

Training Workshop for the NGO animators on Participation and Participatory Research.

Contents and Methods:

A.

1. What is Participation?
   Why and how people participate
   (These were covered by concrete examples and experiences.)

2. Role of intervening agency/activist to promote participation
   (A group discussion)

B

1. What is research and why do we need research in our work ?
   How can common people do their own research ?
   (Educational input was provided from the experience of involvement in Participatory Research).

2. Process of Participatory Research
   (An input)

3. Benefit of a research process conducted by the people
   (A group discussion)

4. Methods of Participatory Research and Appropriateness.

Though the overall design was the same, for the Orissa group, special focus was given to participatory research and investigation process. For the Rajasthan group, the focus was on building people's forums and women's organisations.

Village Meetings

Following the workshop, the research team conducted village meetings to pursue the participatory process. This exercise was undertaken to enumerate the local issues. The detailed process of the meetings in Rajasthan and Orissa are given below.

Rajasthan:

The NGO animators and the identified village activists made house to house visits. During the visits they talked to the women about their day to day problems. At the end of the visit the animators asked the women to come to a meeting to collectively discuss the social issues and ways to take up possible action.

All information collected during the house visits was put together and broad categories prepared. The issues which emerged are as follows:

* The tribal women exist on a subsistance economy. The tribal men do not contribute their earnings to the family. Part of it is spent on alcohol. Women take full responsibility of maintaining the household economy. In the absence of a regular income, they are always in fear of the household economy collapsing.

* The prevelance of polygamy among men make the women feel very insecure. Many married women live alone with young dependant children, without the support of husbands.

* The household chores like collection of fuel and water takes up a lot of time for the women. Since they also work outside, they do not have any time to rest.

* Both tribal and non-tribal women live in utter despair as they are not allowed to take part in any decisions regarding household matters, particularly money.

* The lack of educational and employment facilities for young children is of major concern to the women.

* The health and nutritional status of the women is very low. Women recognise this fact but are helpless and unable to alleviate the situation.

The forces responsible for the problems mentioned above are mainly social and economic in nature. The insecurity of the women is mainly due to the practice of poligamy and alcoholism among men. But they are constantly pushing themselves to meet the basic problem of survival without questioning the emerging

problems and issues. Secondly, disbursment of loans by the government has created high dependancy among men on this loan. The loan money is only disbursed to the male heads of the household. This has reinforced the belief that the household economic responsibility is only the man's. Thirdly, people beleive that the perpetuation of their problems are a result of their destiny.

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First Meeting with the Community:

During the meeting all the above issues were presented before the women. Along with the presentation of the broad problems,various examples were given from different parts of the country ,where women have come together and worked on thier own to take up action on their immediate socio-economic issues. This enthused the women and acted as a catalyst for further discussions on their day to day problems. Perhaps, at this point it was necessary to provide some time to the group of women to discuss the issues collectively on their own. Local women rarely get an opportunity to sit together to talk about these issues. It was found that the tribal women mostly discussed the economic situation of their respective families, whereas the upper caste women of Kanwa village did not feel comfortable about disclosing their economic situation and asked the NGO animators repeatedly what kind of material support the NGO could provide.

In the other villages like Chundarada,Tayalan and Moder,where the majority of the people are tribals, no women from the caste families attended the meeting. Whereas in Kanwa, where the caste village is large and the tribal settlement is separate from the caste village. both the tribal and caste women preferred separate meetings. Even though separate meetings were organised for the caste settlement, very few women attended the meeting.

The nature of participation, and the questions and demands raised by the local women posed certain further questions to the researchers regarding participation as a strategy for initiating the feasibility study. We all agreed that increased participation is a good thing. But, has our assumption of participation coincided with the women's? We believed that we were creating opportunities for the women to interact with one another and understand their problems collectively, and, in this way, not treating them merely as the objects of the development research. But it was seen that all the village women, while sharing their problems, had certain expectations from the local NGO and the research team. Though the caste village women made this very explicit, the tribal women made covert mention of it. When one of the NGO animators asked: "Did you have any problems in coming to this meeting?", one of the tribal women of Moder village replied, "After returning from the meeting, the men are going to ask what material benefits we have received". The poor

communities, especially women, regard themselves as passive recipients even though in day to day life they define and determine their own exsistance and survival. It is therefore essential to remove dependency and make people regard themselves not as passive recipients and consumers of development services but as the creators of the process.

The second question which needs to be reflected upon for our own understanding, is the difference in language and expressions used by the tribal women and caste women in voicing their expectations from the initiated participatory process. This difference in expression has no correlation with the level of education or economic status of the family. The caste women who come to the meetings are as illiterate and economically backward as the tribal women. But, the tribal women are in the process of getting organised. Some of the tribal women have attended a Mahila Mela organised by the local NGO. They have experienced, but not yet articulated, the benefits of group formation.

The third question we need to look at is why the educated, comparatively better off caste women did not attend the meeting. Though there is no specific explanation for this, our hunch is that the educated caste women felt that such meetings would not benefit them. Moreover, during our home visits to their houses, these women did not respond to our suggestions. All the discussions were with the male members. And the men all said the same thing: "If you have any programme for us, tell us and we will adopt it".

All these questions make it clear that although the assumptions behind participation is to provide rural women a role in decision making, there is no one way of making this happen. The path can only be systematized if some effort is made to organise them in addressing or resolving some immediate issues.

As the local NGO is working in all the villages, the next step was to continue house to house visits and organise a series of women's meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to make the women aware of the advantages of organising themselves and investigating community issues collectively. Another objective was to collect information on water and sanitation. However, we realised that since the problems are multidimensional, the

present work of the NGO (deepening of wells, installation of handpumps, supply of fodder, installation of toilets in public places) should not only focus on participation within an educational framework; at this stage the NGO animators should also discuss water and sanitation problems

Orissa:

In the selected villages, the NGO animators and the research team made house visits and called village meetings similar to those of Rajasthan. The issues related to the needs of the community differed significantly in both the tribal and caste villages. It may be mentioned here that the response of the community members to the house visits in both the caste and tribal villages were also different. Perhaps it will be appropriate to mention the response of the community to the research team and then spell out the issues, since the articulation of the community issues has a bearing on the response of the community. In the villages like Tamana, Maraibadi and Vikaspur, the local NGO has been working with the community on several issues. These three are tribal villages. These villagers accepted the research team, although there were a few outsiders in the team. During the visit, both men and women talked about the developmental programmes they have been undertaking and gave their analysis about the success and failure of the programmes. The local NGO animators were quite surprised about the way the village women analysed the causes for the failure of the health programme.

They also asked questions about other programmes which could be taken up. The response to the team was more or less the same in the other villages. Contrary to the tribal village experience, in the caste village, no one responded to the research team. Having no other option, the research team met the village sarpanch (head). Although he appreciated the idea, he was not in a position to render much help. However, he took the research team on a guided tour of the village. On the way the team met a few men and exchanged ideas. During this visit, though the research team could perceive a number of obvious issues which could have been taken for immediate developmental activity, no one mentioned a single one: not even the village head. The only issue which was repeatedly mentioned was the division of the village in terms of village politics (party affiliation and affiliation to the present and earlier village head).

Consequently, though meetings were followed by door to door visits in the tribal villages, a series of visits were made to the caste villages. In the visit to the caste village effort was made not to align with any of the groups. During these repeated visits we built up a good relationship with some of the villagers, but no breakthrough was made with the women of the upper castes.

The issues which emerged were completely different in the caste village and the tribal village.

Tribal Village:

* How to build up skills and resources within the community to deal with health and illiteracy, and to manage social forestry programmes.

* How to acquire land patta (record) for those who possess land but have not yet received the papers.

* How to market forest goods directly, in a profitable way, without middlemen.

* Other developmental programmes government has for the tribal people.

Caste Village:

* Why is the government not opening hospitals, schools, loan facilities for reclammation of land, etc.

Following this, village meetings were called in all the villages. In the tribal villages of Orissa both men and women participated in the meeting, whereas in the caste village no women participated.

Levels of Participation in the Enquiry Process.

The nature of participation in the four different villages in Orissa and Rajasthan provided some more insights. It is now clear to us that participation is not a formula which can be applied to any situation. The participation which was perceived

in the villages of Orissa was not because the tribals were illiterate and therefore participated because they did not know better, and the caste villagers were literate and exposed and hence questioned the situation. On the contrary, the distinction in the nature of participation was directly related to the level of group feeling and realization of the group of their collective strength and potential.

The lack of participation of women in the caste village of Rajasthan and Orissa is more or less a similar phenomena. This is because women in both caste villages are never considered as relevant to the production process. This is so deep rooted that even though women play a major role in their domestic economy, they do not feel confident of taking a role in the decision making process. They think that their participation is immaterial. This attitude of submission and internalization and rationalization of disempowerment is no longer experienced by the tribal women. This is a direct result of organizing, understanding and realising their capacity and potential as individuals and as a group.

After the village meeting, the NGO animators continued their visits. The purpose was to collect more relevant information on community issues and to prepare people to plan programmes on their own. In Orissa, at this stage, water and sanitation issues were also discussed in the meetings.

The design of the enquiry was more or less the same for both Orissa and Rajasthan. However, the Orissa group of animators emphasised the need of capacity building on participatory investigation methodology, whereas the Rajasthan group of activists asked for capacity building in eliciting community participation. This distinctive demand is related to the past experience of both the groups. The Orissa group has skillfully elicited community participation in all their programmes. During the process of their work they have also been collecting information through investigation. The Rajasthan group on the other hand, have been systematically developing a process of community participation not only for the water and sanitation programme but for developing community need-based programmes. It may be remembered that though the primary objective of the iresearch is the same, the various partners in the research process may have some other objectives. Thus including the concern of the co-partners in the participatory investigation may be an essential ingredient in the methodology.

F. ANALYZING THE ISSUES: KITCHEN TO TOILET

"It was summer in Rajasthan. Wells were running dry. The men were desparately trying to deepen their wells, but all in vain. The few handpumps installed in the villages of Kanwa, Taleyan, Moder and Chundavada were crowded from early morning to late evening. Empty vessels, anxious women and the cranking sounds of the handpumps were just three aspects of rural water services of these Rajasthan villages. Once a pot is filled, a sense of achievement is reflected on the faces of the women. Within twenty to forty minutes, the same woman again has to listen to the cranking sound of the handpump. The anxieties again surface. To release the anxiety the women chat, crack jokes, smile at each other. It is a routine affair".

Water Utilization

The hilly Rajasthan tribal villages have three major sources of water - wells, ponds and rivers. All the three sources dry up during the summer. The wells are of two types, personal and community-owned. Most of the personal wells are in the agricultural field. The community-owned wells (Sarvajanik Bavdi in the local language) are both inside and outside the settlement. Community wells are generally constructed at a lower level. Invariably these wells are open. Though these wells are barely maintained, most of them are good water sources. Since everybody cannot afford to have a personal well, the community well serves most of the households. Most of the community wells

are on the roadside. Any passerby can stop on the way and step down to the well for water. This is why the community wells are left open. Few pools of water remain on the pond and river during summer, and they are generally used for bathing purposes, both by the people and the animals. During the last two-three years hand pumps have been installed in the villages. This seems to be the solution to the drinking water scarcity. But some of these wells are drying also.

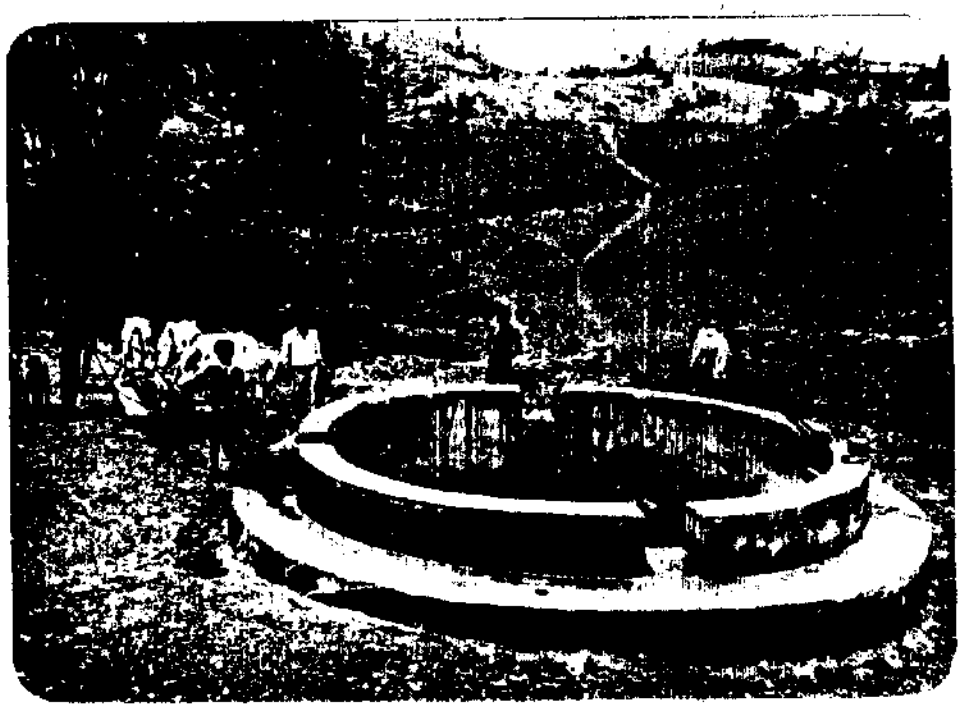
In 584 families of Chundavada, there are about 90 private wells. Even though the houses are scattered, six to seven families use one well. Bu the well is owned by only one household. During our visit about twenty households were digging their personal wells. About fifty wells have been unused for many years, as these wells do not have a good water source. Over the years, these wells have been covered with soil and the families have abandoned them. Out of these 90 private wells hardly one third have water reserve during the summer. In the whole village there are only 4 community wells. Two wells are in the centre of the village, one on the outskirts,and one in the middle school yard. Except the well at the school, the other three community wells were not properly maintained. These wells will be at least 80 to 100 years old. Recently, with the initiative of the local NGO, all the wells were deepened and brick and cement plaster was put on the walls of the wells. Though the concentration of privately owned wells are more in Talaya than other villages, the position of wells are similar in all the villages.

The private wells are used by the owner household for both agricultural irrigation purposes and drinking and other household use, whereas other neighbour non-owners use the water from these wells for household use only. In case of caste villages, no Harijan is allowed to take water from the upper caste owned wells. Since most of the wells are drying up or the water level is going down, at times the owner household restrict their use.

The community wells inside the village, are used for several household purposes such as bathing, cleaning etc. The wells that are outside the village are used for bathing, to fetch water for toilet purposes and to provide water for the cattle to drink. These wells are kept open so that any one can enter into the well through steps and fetch water. But as the water level is going down, these wells are dug deep . As a consequence, the steps do not reach the water level. Presently these wells are either fixed with a handpump to pump water or a wheel and rope, so that anybody can tie a pot on one end of the rope and draw water by pulling the rope on the wheel. Many times, the rope either becomes worn or slips from the grrove,inconveniencing the people. Since the past two to three years several handpumps have been installed, resolving the water scarcity to some extent.



RELIABLE
WATER RESOURCE,
CAN WE
PRESERVE IT ?



RENOVATED
COMMUNITY WELL



"EK JODA PANI"

The environmental sanitation of all the villages are extremely poor. In the caste villages, the waste water from the houses come out to the village street,creating a drain in the middle of the road. The tribal villagers live on the top of the hill. The waste water from these houses flows downwards. In summer, this water dries immediately. All the households dispose the solid waste near the house in a ditch. But when a strong wind blows, the solid waste get scattered all over the place. In compact villages this solid waste gets scattered all over the village. However, cowdungs is stored very systematically outside the residence area.

Except few upper caste rich households no household has provisions for toilets.

The villagers have developed their own water and sanitaion practices to match the available resources along with the need, habit, habitat, topography and economy. In the compact plain area village, the point of water source is not very far from the houses. In a family of 6-8 members (an average size nuclear family), the total water requirement for household use is 12 jodes each, morning and evening. (A pair of two water pots is called a jode). Women generally carry water to the houses. This water is used primarily for cooking and drinking purposes. The women usually bathe with this water at home. The men and the children judiciously use this water for bathing purposes. Some of the washing of dishes and clothes are done at home. But when the water demand is more at home (either because some male member has used up moe water than usual or some guest comes) the women take the dishes and clothes to the water sources. The cleaning is done either near the tubewell or at community well or at a pond or river. The male members in the caste village go to the community well or the wells near the agricultural land. In the compact village, on an average, it takes fifteen to twenty minutes to carry a jode of water. On an average, six person-hours are spent on collection of water. In a joint family the water requirement increases two to three fold. But in this situation, the burden is shared by the other women members. Even the young female children extend a helping hand. Each household keeps some small vessels so that young female children can carry water for the household use.

All the household members in compact villages go far off for defecation. Near to the compact villages, as there is no landscape to provide shelter for defecation, the villagers generally go to the distant agricultural land or close to the river bed. Men do not mind defecating in a comparatively less sheltered place. The water to be used for defecation is either collected from the stored water from the house, or from a well or handpump if it is on the way to the field. Women in the compact village go for defecation early in the morning, much before the sun rises, when it is still dark. This is so that they can go to a nearer place without any male intrusions into their privacy. In the evening, after finishing all their chores, the women go to the fields in groups of three or four.

The composition of this group is generally constant. During their walk to the field, they use this opportunity to exchange small talk as well as intimacies with each other. The young children defecate near the house, which is later cleaned by the mother of the child and thrown into the nearest garbage dump.

The practices related to water and sanitation are completely different in the tribal hill region. Each time they have to come down from the top of the hill to collect water. In some cases women have to carry water upto an altitude of fifty meters. Carrying a jode of water takes much more time, upto thirty minutes. However, the nature of use is similar to that of compact villages.

The tribal people of Rajasthan build their houses on top of the hill inspite ofthe problem in carrying water. Each household is in possession of the small hill. From the top of the hill they can look after the crops and trees and keep them safe from the cattles and thieves. As most of the families are involved in daily wage labour they leave the house early in the morning and both men and women go for defecation on their way to work. When the villagers stay back at home, they do not have to go far. They can sit under a tree or a bush on the hill, little away from the house and finish defecation. However, in summer when the hill top turns barren and the trees shed their leaves, the people face acute problem in maintaining privacy because anyone passing on the road downhill can see straight to the top of the hill without any obstruction.

The tribal families carry water from the water stored at home. In some cases women go nearer to the pond or river and wash the vessels, clothes and finish defecation and then come back home.

The water and sanitation services in villages of Orissa are not very different from the Rajasthan villages. The village settlement is on the plain area. The major water sources are wells and ponds. The water from the wells and tubewells is used for household purposes, whereas the ponds are used for cleaning after defecation, washing clothes, bathing, etc. This practice is the same for both tribal and non-tribal villages. In the Orissa villages the total amount of water spent on household use is comparatively less than the Rajasthan villages as both male, female and children bathe in the pond or near the well.

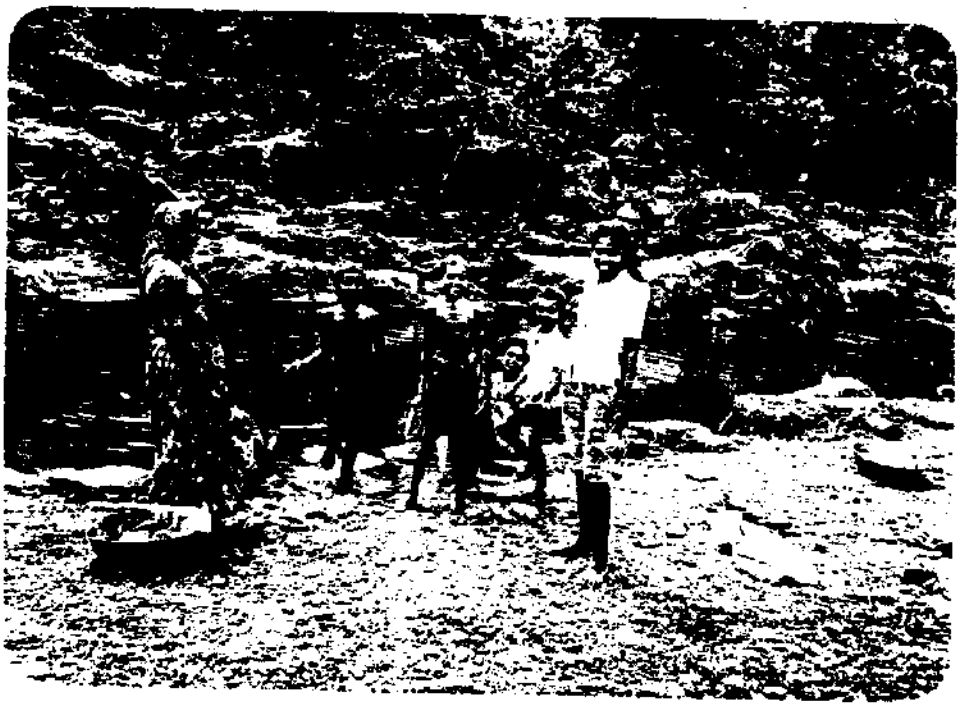


DEFECATION

A QUICK AND SLY ACT !



VILLAGE LANE !

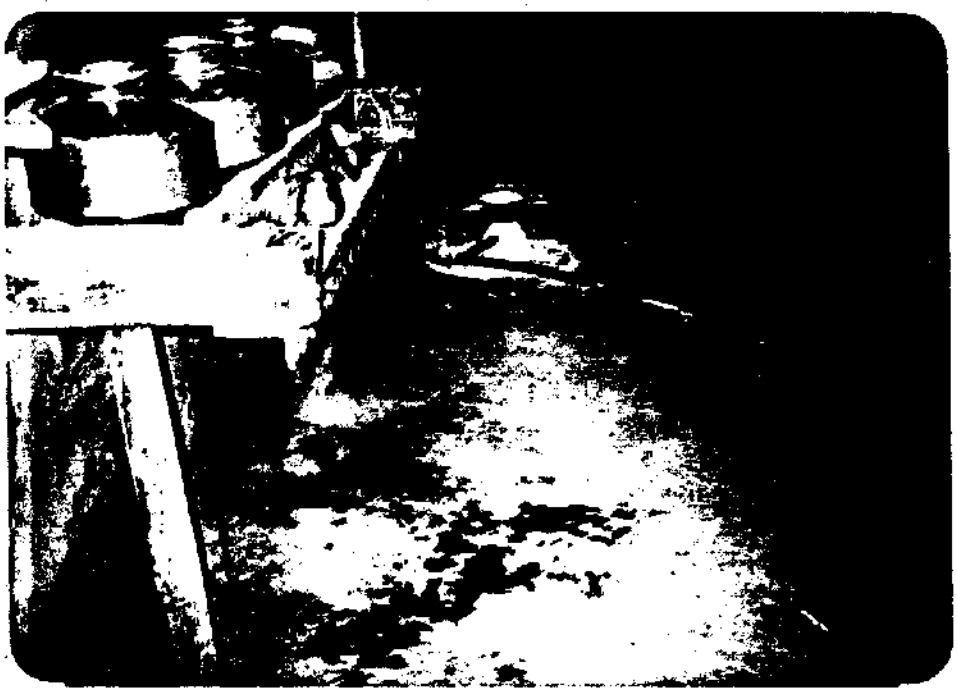


NO OPTION



SANCTUM SANCTORUM

OF THE HOUSE !



The sanitation services and practices are similar in both Orissa and Rajasthan villages. But in Orissa the caste villages near the roadside use the roadside for defecation. This practice is related to the availability of space. Women use the roadside at night only, whereas the men go to the roadside any time of the day without any problem. However, in general, both men and women in caste villages go to the nearby pond in groups and finish defecation in the agricultural field near to the pond and do the washing and bathing in the pond.

In general the set of practices related to water and sanitation in both Orissa and Rajasthan has a direct bearing upon the value, structure, attitude, knowledge, exposure, and economic status and topography of the area. A comparative analysis of the practices in both the states are given below.

In both Orissa and Rajasthan there are two types of water use: one, for the kitchen inside (domestic use), and second, for all cleaning purposes (outside house use). Water to be used in the house is treated as 'pure'. In both tribal and non-tribal houses, in Orissa and Rajasthan the water is kept in clean pots inside the kitchen. This water is collected after changing clothes or after a bath. However, this concept of purity is very strictly adhered to in case of upper castes. But, some lower caste and tribal families also strictly follow the concept of purity. This practice may be explained in terms of 'sanskritization'. Contrary to the concept of 'purity', all the families considered water as pure if it *looked* clean. Water from a neighbour's well of the same caste or tubewell is considered pure. Any flowing water (river) is considered clean. Pond water used for bathing is considered impure for the kitchen.

Two set of separate vessels are used for storage of water in the kitchen and outside. The vessels inside the kitchen are made of metal or burnt earthern pots, depending on the economic status. The water inside the kitchen is kept covered. The area of the hearth (chulla) and storage for water for the kitchen is considered as the *sanctum sanctorium* of the house. Though religious purity of the kitchen is considered primary, the cleanliness of water is often forgotten. None of the households in Orissa filter the water before storing it for drinking. In Rajasthan, the educational effort made to eradicate the guinea worm has developed the practice of filtering water. However, such practice is not universal.

In both Orissa and Rajasthan villages anything waste is considered as impure. All waste water is thrown out of the house. Human excreta is considered as most impure. But there is no particular value to the excreta of children. This is the reason adults go out for defecation while children do it near the house. In both Orissa and Rajasthan the upper caste women preferred to change their clothes or wash their clothes and feet after defecation. In tribal and lower Hindu castes, such practice is not adhered to. However, the tribal and lower Hindu caste women who do not work as labourers (work for wages) prefer the ritual of washing clothes after defecation . This practice is not done as a matter of hygiene but as a matter of purity. The few caste families who use the toilets constructed outside the house, also adhered to the ritual of cleaning clothes.

The upper caste rich people who have constructed toilets, consciously built them outside the house. In addition to the adherence to the concept of religious purity, there is a strong sense of maintaining privacy. In Rajasthan the concept of privacy is very strong, especially amongst women. This is the reason most tribal women and caste women bathe at home. They do not have any special bathroom at the house. At the backyard a saree or long piece of cloth is hung to provide privacy. The intensity of feeling of privacy is positively related to the economic status of the family, the age group of the women and their position in the production process. The families who have constructed toilets, give high consideration to the privacy. It is a fact that women who go out for defecation in the day time have to undergo continuous torture and anxiety of finding an isolated spot for the same. Going out for defecation is such an old practice, that some elderly women prefer not to use toilets even though they have one.

Besides the similarity of value on purity and privacy attached to water and sanitation practices, the caste and tribal villagers maintain a distinctive social social to the use of toilets. The tribal women in both Orissa and Rajasthan go alone for defecation, whereas the compact caste village women go in groups. The practice is related to the nature of dwelling patterns and the position of women in the family. The caste women are not able to talk openly to their peer groups inside the house in the presence of other elderly men and women. The time for defecation is the only time when they talk to other peer women openly and intimately. Talking loudly and joking by the women inside the house are considered socially undesirable. Moreover, talking about sexual problems in front of others is considered as profane. Contrarily, the tribal women do not face such social constraints.

Though women have a central role in family water and sanitation maintainenance, they do not have any say in the developmental services. For example, in the choice of digging a well for the house or installation of a tubewell for the community, the women are not consulted. The male members always prefer to dig a well close to the land rather than close to the house. The time spent in collection of water is never taken into account.

Maintaining cleanliness in public places, be it on the streets, the roads or at the community wells andr tubewell is considered as a lower grade job by the upper caste people. This is the reason the tubewells are much cleaner in the tribal area than in the caste villages. It has been noticed that the male members of the Orissa tribes clean the surroundings of the tubewells.

In general, the maintainenance of water and sanitation is purely a woman's job and is based on the concept of purity and privacy. The cultural distinction between domestic and outside use does not take into account the aspect of environmental sanitation. Though there are certain differences between the caste and the Hindu villages, and between the villages of Orissa and Rajasthan, it is in degree only.

G. FEEDBACK - A PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING

The series of meetings with the villagers in both Orissa and Rajasthan reveal that participation cannot be attained as desired. In our initial efforts, though the emphasis was on the participation of women, in Orissa the whole community (both men and women) participated in the process of discussions and collective investigation from the beginning. In Rajasthan, though the research team only concentrated on the participation of women, there was a resistance from men. Rural men could not comprehend why only the paticipation of women was emphasised. They believe that if anything has to be done, it can be done through men only. In this situation, where men do not respect and trust the capabilities of women, it has been realised that it is necessary to build community awareness rather than building awareness among women only. As a consequence both men and women were encouraged to participate in the process.

After a series of meetings with the villagers on the various social issues, the problem of water and sanitation was posed directly in all the villages. The villagers of Rajasthan pointed out the scarcity of water but did not mention any other aspect, whereas the Orissa villagers did not mention any point. In informal meetings the research team asked simple questions about

(a) The amount of time consumed in collecting water;

(b) Whether the water consumed was safe or not;

(c) What problems they faced with the wells;

(d) Is the village clean;

(e) Why the community wells and handpumps were not kept clean;

(f) What problems were faced for defecation;

(g) What is done to maintain sanitation in the home;

(h) Who decides about water and sanitation services.

Each person was encouraged to think about these issues and speak about them. In Rajasthan, the caste villagers spoke about the scarcity of water and lack of privacy for defecation. Some men mentioned the urgent need for toilets. But the reason for this was not for sanitation, but basically because of the lack of privacy and the question of status. Few upper caste male members mentioned that the "educated young girls feel inconvenienced to go out for defecating". It is a fact that those who are exposed to urban life and used to privatetoilet rooms cannot use the fields for this purpose. Some village women mentioned that they felt humiliated to go out for defecation. In case of dysentry or diarrhoea, some women stay in the field through out the day, fearing that in case of an emergency, they will not be able to cover the distance from the house. A majority of the caste women mentioned that bathrooms and toilets are the major requirements. For both, importance was given to the need for privacy.

In the tribal villages, both men and women mentioned the problem of the enormous amount of time spent on fetching water.The issue of sanitation was considered insignificant. They realised that community sanitation was an issue of general cleanliness, but no one could relate it to defecation. In response to the question of problems in defecation, few villagers mentioned that some people are bitten by snakes and other insects while going out for defecation. Surprisingly, the tribal women did not mention about privacy while defecating but spoke about the problems of bathin in the open. However, they related this to the issue of household and community water source sanitation.

In the tribal and caste villages in Orissa, the set of questions broke the silence. The villagers were dissatisfied with the village water and sanitation situation and related the water issue as a problem of inadequate resources and the sanitation issue as a problem of intrusion into privacy.

Following this the research team started a health and hygiene campaign. They were given a brief training on sanitation education. The training included household and community sanitation, and family and community health. The researchers were told about acute respiratory infections among children which are caused by improper sanitation facilities and wet mud in and around the house due to the disposal of waste water. They were also told ow bacterial and viral infections lead to nose and mouth secretion and lungs infection among children, the causes of diarrhoea, parasite infection caused due to contact with infected water, soil, etc. The cases of guineaworm infection in Rajasthan and schistosomiasis in of Orissa villages were given special importance . The researchers were also trained to impart education on how to break the cycle of contamination.

All the above aspects were simplified and the researchers, along with the NGO animators talked to the villagers. The common diseases were related to the lapse of sanitary conditions in the villages. The research team initially thought that since the concept of purity was so prevalant, people might not accept the germ theory. But to our surprise the tribal villagers of Orissa accepted the germ theory and themselves related many of the health problems like scabies, diarrhoea, and hookworm infection to the insanitary conditions caused by defecating in the field and using the pond water for baths, for washing clothes and utensils as well as cleaning up after defecation. One woman said, "We never knew there were so many diseases in the water". The research team explained to the villagers how different tiny worms inside the water and soil penetrate the skin and invade the blood vessels.

However, the caste villagers of Orissa and all the villagers of Rajasthan could not relate to the germ theory. Perhaps this was because these villagers were never before exposed to such health education.

Following this, the community and researchers together started an intensive investigation to identify the problems of water and sanitation. Individual families were contacted, and some of the research team members went around with a few villagers. Each household was asked to enumerate the problems they faced in their day to day activities. As a consequence of fifteen days of this exercise in each village, the tribal villagers of Orissa could identify the unhygienic water sources, how the water gets contaminated, causes of the lapse in environmental sanitation,

problems in going out for defecation particularly in the rainy season. During the rainy season, when the fields are being cultivated and small bushes and wild grass come up in the forest, the tribal villagers do not find a suitable place to go for defecation. Though the problem of privacy is reduced finding a safe place to sit becomes an acute problem.

At this point, the caste villagers in both Rajasthan and Orissa and the tribal villagers in Rajasthan were still preoccupied with the issue of privacy. In all the villages the women linked the issue of water to the distance they had to cover, and the issue of sanitation to the lack of privacy. But it is interesting to note that during this phase of study the tribal villagers of Rajasthan lost interest in the sanitation issue. The issue of privacy was no longer important while going for defecation. The field note reveals that the problem of privacy with regard to defecation is a seasonal problem.

This was a real test for the research team. In the caste village of Orissa the plan was to continue the community meeting along with sanitation education and to organise the community to take up the issue collectively.

In Rajasthan a completely different education process was begun, taking into account the low level of exposure of the community in general, and women in particular, and the lack of faith and trust of the men on the capability of women. Both men and women were involved in the process. Our earlier experience showed that during educational interventions at both the family and the community level, inputs through printed material was not very effective. In this context, efforts were made to create conditions so that the community members could start questioning their assumptions themselves.

All practices and problems related to water and sanitation were put together in the form of questions. All the questions were formulated taking stock of the people's attitude, perceptions and practices.The questions can be broadly divided into:

(i) Demographic profile

(ii) Ownership and occupational background

(iii) Gender specific roles

(iv) Problems related to the collection of water and nature of use of water

(v) Sanitary practices and related problems and gender specific roles and problems

(vi) Attitudes towards alternative sanitatary practices

(vii) Epidemiological profile of the village as perceived by the inhabitants

(viii)Visions/plans of the people on community water and sanitation issues.

The purpose of these sets of questions were two fold. The primary objective was to create a structured situation in a group meeting along with men and women so that they could reflect on the issues. The secondary objective was to pool the individual opinions on these issues and to systematically put them before the community for further analysis and action. Perhaps it would be approopriate to illustrate a case in which the questionnaire was used to create a structured situation of reflection and analysis of the family and community on water and sanitation. It must be remembered that this method was adapted since the community was not able to comprehend the issue of sanitation beyond the aspect of lack of privacy.

In all the villages of Rajasthan, cluster meetings were organised inviting both men and women. In these meetings the NGO animators and the research team talked about the rural sanitation services, its benefits and how in other parts of the country people were adopting alternative sanitation practices. As a follow up of the discussion, the group was asked to reflect on their problems collectively. Discussing about the problems related to the physical inconveniences of defecation, the group shifted to other issues. The men discussed the possibility of the availability of some subsidised government loans, and the women discussed drought, the problems in rearing cattle, non-availability of wage to assist the family income, unemployment of young children etc.

At this point, an intervention by the research team to make the group reflect on the sanitation issue was a dilemma. Such an intervention might be considered contradictory to the participatory principle, and a question of researcher's priority over people's priority. The only rationale we used was the distinction between the local NGO and the research team. Earlier we had mentioned that the local NGO and the people were to be the implementers of the participatory process, not the research team. The present research is only a part of a broader process. The commitment of the local NGO to follow up the participatory process reduced our ethical dilemma.

While pursuing the structured learning agenda, the local animator read out all the questions separately in both male and female groups and asked the members to think about the questions. The questions temporarily left the group non-plussed. Soon after, the village level activists, both men and women, were asked to answer the questions in front of everybody. However, they were asked with prior permission. This helped everybody to open up. Some of the answers related to the issues are given in Table II to Table IV.

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDANTS

Name of the Village	Male	Female	Caste	Tribe	SC
Kanwa	22	48	40	20	10
Chundavada	18	32	14	36	0
Moder	25	54	17	62	0
Talevan	16	30	32	8	6
Total 245	81	164			

TABLE II

FAMILY SIZE AND WATER USE

Size of the family	No. of families	Average water consumption	Bath	Washing	Kitchen and drinking
4 member	28	8 Joda	2	2	4
5 to 8	172	16 Joda	5	4	7
8 & above	45	19 Joda	6	6	7

TABLE III

SANITARY PRACTICES

Name of village	No. of families use toilet	No. of families do not use toilet	Privacy	Physical	Requirement of toilet Health	General inconvenience	General cleanliness
Kanwa	5	65	33	12	5	15	(5)
Chundavada	3	47	22	12	4	8	(4)
Moder	0	79	40	15	4	14	(6)
Talevan	0	46	23	7	2	9	(5)
245 = 100	8	237	118	46	15	46	(20)
			48.2%	18.8%	6.1%	18.8%	(8.1%)

Note: The bracketed category indicates people who do not feel the requirement of toilet

TABLE IV

TOILET PRACTICES

Name of the village	Use Toilet		Do not face problem		Having problem	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	M	F
Kanwa	12	9	12	6	0	3
Chundavada	9	16	7	9	2	6
Moder	13	19	11	9	2	10
Talevan	7	12	7	8	0	4

The execution of the questionnaire during the meeting helped the group to articulate the issues. Men who had never recognised the role of women in household water and sanitation management realised the amount of work and time women put into this work. More so, it provided a chance to all the members to talk about the issue more openly. These meetings were conducted in twelve to eighteen member teams. In each village several other exercises were undertaken. Besides understanding of the issue, the entire community was also exposed to information related to their practices and attitudes towards existing sanitation practices.

This exercise revealed that fetching water was a major task for women. The installation of toilets without the provision of easy access to water will increase the burden. Table IV clearly shows that although most of the people do not use toilets, about 90 percent feel the need for toilets. About 50 per cent feel this need solely for reasons of privacy, whereas the others give importance to privacy without citing it as the sole rationale - 19 per cent gave reasons of physical inconveninces. 8 per cent gave reasons of health and hygiene, 19 per cent gave reasons of general cleanliness and 8 per cent did not feel the need for toilets at all.



COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING





FAMILIARIZING WITH SANI-TECH.

STATE OF THE ART



LEARNING TOGETHER



JUST A PART OF CUSTOM
WE ARE NOT SHY

H. COLLECTIVE RETHINKING: WHAT CAN BE DONE

The six month long collective understanding of rural water and sanitation has highlighted the need for easy access to water sources and toilets for defecation. However, the reasons for the need for toilets varied from person to person and village to village. Despite health and sanitation education, in both Orissa and Rajasthan the rural women gave primacy to closer water sources and secluded spots for defecation. The questions of health and hygiene were secondary. In the tribal villages of Orissa, where health education had been imparted by the local NGO much before the start of the study, the people still gave secondary importance to health and sanitation in the day to day sanitary practices.

Though the villagers expressed the need for toilets, the technology neede to install these became an obstacle in articulating the need. In Rajasthan the local NGO installed demonstration toilets and bathrooms in all the four villages taken under the study. This opportunity was utilised to make the people understand the inbuilt technology and sanitary principles. The double pit honeycomb sanitary pits and toilet pots were explained to the people in detail. During the construction of the toilet and subsequently, the villagers were invited to visit the installation site. During this phase, contrary to our expectation of the demonstration being an educational aid for articulation of the need, the villagers expressed polarised opinions. In Rajasthan, around 70 per cent of the women and about 50 per cent of the men rejected outright the idea of installing toilets. They made it clear that they did not see the need for such a huge structure inside the house. The caste villagers, though, expressed the need for toilets, but started questioning the availability of space. Some women anticipated the need for additional water to clean the toilets. Those who agreed to install the toilets were reluctant to pay from their own budget.

At this point a group of men and women from Chundavada village in Rajasthan met the research team and asked about the available government services for rural sanitation. Though the purpose of the study was not to provide services, the process had raised certain expectations among the people. The District Administration Official was contacted and information related to the sanitary services was collected. It was understood that Dungarpur district has earmarked Rs. 4.986 Lakhs under the RLEGP programme for 1986 - 87, and Rs. 2.112 Lakhs under the NREP programme for rural sanitation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. In spite of this, and although the installation cost of the complete toilet was quite low, no agency has yet come forward to execute the scheme. Moreover, no efforts had been made to look into the requirements of the people and to educate them as to how they could meet those requirements with the available loans. The Block and the Panchayat Samiti are responsible for the execution of this programme.

In Orissa, a few villagers contacted the local NGO to provide an exosure to them to understand the technology. As similar to Rajasthan, the compact caste village felt the problem of space to install toilets. The cost factor also made the people think twice about. A tribal woman enquired about the total life span of a double pit toilet. When she was told that it is about 25 years, she replied, "So much money for only 25 years!".

The major question in the minds of the people was what could be done, and how it could be done. Perhaps, this was the time to collectively think about the present community practices of water and sanitation and what the community can do to develop and adopt alternative water and sanitary practices. In each village community (both men and women) meetings were organised to develop action plans.

After a series of consultations with the village men and women, collectively and separately, in groups and individually in each village, planning meetings wee organised. The date and time of the metings were planned in advance in consultation with the villagers. A resource person who had previous experience on rural water and sanitation programmes was also invited to these meetings. These meetings, in all the three villages focussed on three things:

(a) How do the villagers perceive the problems of water and sanitation?

(b) What do they want to do about it?

(c) What would be their role in adopting and maintaining alternative services?

Orissa

Village Tamana:

The first planning meeting was organised in Tamana. Purno, one of the Programme Coordinators of local NGO, Gram Vikas, reached the village little earlier than the sheduled time of the meeting. The villagers were very enthusiastic about the meeting. The bread winner of the family returned home early from work. Women finished their cooking early . A group of young boys were busy arranging the meeting place, between two rows of houses. The cattle were tied away from the meeting place, so that there will not be way distractions during the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to look at the environmental sanitary condition of the village and what can be done in this regard. Three main points came up.

(1) Insanitary conditions near the handpump due to lack of proper drainage and indiscriminate use of water for bathing, etc.;

(2) Spread of filth due to defecation at the roadside;

(3) Lack of cleanliness in and around the village;

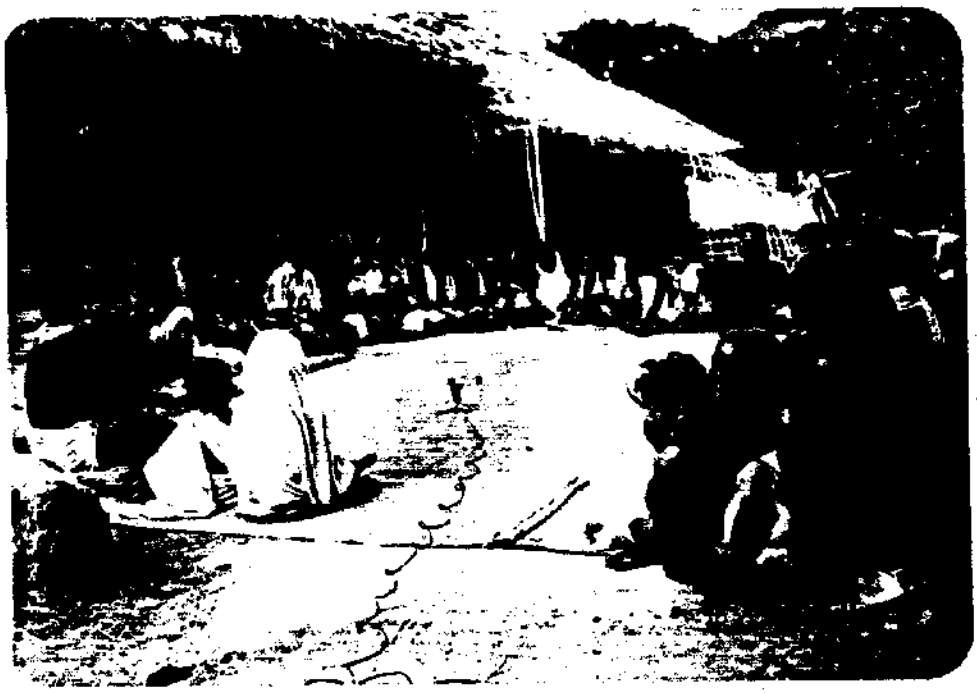
All the villagers agreed on these points. The community developed plans to build a drain at the handpump. A Village Sanitary Committee was formed to instruct and guide the people in keeping the village clean. The village Health Committee members were nominated to this new committee. The villagers also showed concern about the deep wells that were abandoned after the installation of the tubewells. In this regard, the villagers developed a plan to clean the deep wells and use the water for bathing and cleaning instead of using the handpump water. As the nearest pond water is used for bathing, the villagers thought that they should start keeping that water clean also. As a first step, they agreed to stop using the pond water for cleening up directly after defecation. The mothers took the responsibility to educate the children on general hygiene.

When the question of adoption of alternate sanitary services arose, most of the women kept silent. Those villagers who have used toilets and understood the technology were asked to explain it to others. Many people associated the concept of sanitary services with the expenditure involved in building the toilet as well as the structure, and the discussion then shifted to the question of availability of money for adoption of the tiolets.

Most of the villagers, particularly the women, have never used toilets in the past. But all the women were in favour of toilets. They made it clear that they would prefer some permanent structure, even though this would increase the cost of installation. In the whole village only five households preferred to have individual family toilets. At this point the villagers were informed about the government and other agencies' sanitation programmes. They were told that if the villagers prepared a programme, then they would receive full subsidy for low cost toilets since various agencies extend subsidies to tribals for sanitation programmes. The cost could only be lowered by preparing the structure around the toilet using local resources and donating free labour to dig the pits, etc. The villagers were quite willing to volunteer free labour but remained persistent about having a permanent structure, preferably of bricks and cement. A bamboo thatch could have been prepared by the villagers for covering the toilet but the women felt that when the bamboo screen became old it may not be replaced. Few women suggested that they could have a few common toilets may be built little away from the village, instead of individual toilets. They gave the assurance that they would clean the toilets, if tap water was provided for this. This idea was accepted by the other villagers who were earlier wanting individual toilets.

The women were not not ready to compromise in lowering the cost. Perhaps their persistence in having permanent brick and cement structure and the provision of tap water was a reflection of their exposure to the urban standards of sanitary practices. They pleaded that instead of increasing the number of toilets, fewer toilets may be installed but of the best quality. At this point it was made clear to the villagers that the provision of permanent structures and tap water will hike the price and no agency might provide full financial support. In response to this, the women suggested that if the cost was high and they could not receive full financial support, they could generate some funds if an income generating programme could be started for them. They were speaking from their experience. In the last three years they have been involved in social forestry programmes for women. They have evolved a community savings scheme by donating one day's wage in a week. The men of Tamana village supported this idea of the women.

The women asked the local NGO Programme Coordinator when they could start the programme. They were very optimistic about the programme, but it was a testing time for the local NGO to follow up the process.



ALL SET FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Vikaspur

A meeting similar to that of Tamana was organised in Vikaspur. But there was less enthusiasm in the villagers of Vikaspur. However, they had many expectations. All the villagers came to the meeting. In this new resettlement colony there was no village leader. But during past one year one of the men has been accepted as the village leader because of his articulation and ability to read and write. The villagers clearly expressed the need of few more tubewells for the village. They understood the problems in the existing sanitary facilities but felt reluctant to suggest anything. Those women who were taken on a sanitary education tour to the local NGO were also silent. One woman said, "These houses are newly built. This is a new village created by Gram Vikas. What more we can demand?". What she was actually saying was that Gram Vikas was the best people to decide. After this all the men and women were requested to express their points of view. The villagers made obvious their expectations of the local NGO to build community toilets. As per Tamana villagers, these people were also in favour of some permanent structure. One woman said, "At least one toilet may be put up in the village, so that it can be used in time of emergency". They knew that a toilet with a permanent structure will cost Rs. 3500/- or more. No one wanted to take possession of any toilet. But the women collectively took the responsibility of keeping community toilets clean. They know that even though the government community sanitary services has the provision to supply an attendant to maintain the toilets, no one will be willing to work in their village.

During the whole process, the expectations of the villagers had increased. They now expected that water and sanitation services would be extended to them. They could not afford any financial support to these services. They were in the process of building up a new village. They were willing and eager to take up any physical work to build their village. Men and women were working hard to develop an economic system to suit their new life style. There were many challenges ahead of them.. Now challenges were increasing for the local NGO, Gram Vikas. This was not the end of the research process for us. The expectations of the people gave a mandate to the participatory process. A village woman said, "Why low cost for us . We need one instead of two - an investment that will provide long term benefits can only take us ahead".

Maraibadi:

This village is similar to that of Tamana and Vikaspur. The women have clearly understood the hygiene lapses in the village. They could relate waterborne and other parasitic diseases to the common health problems. The villagers here do not have any problems about the availability of water. The water and sanitation situation is similar to that of village Tamana. But to

our surprise, the planning meeting did not evolve much response. It may be emphasised here that there is no local leadership, as in the case of Tamana and Vikaspur. In the absence of the research team and local NGO programme coordinators and animators, the villagers had not put in any efforts to plan a concrete proposal.

Medinipur:

The occasion for conducting planning meetings did not come up in Medinipur village during the study process. Many issues came up which polarised the people. The present Sarpanch had sanctioned some fund from the Block office to install toilets in the village. Some of the upper caste households wanted to adopt the sanitary services, but the scheme which was extended to this village was only for scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and those below the poverty line. During the study process,a few scheduled caste and service caste households started showing interest in adapting toilets. Now there was one scheme but two categories of people. Moreover, the upper caste households (who seemed to be above the poverty line) expected a hundred percent subsidy. This created a stalemate in the execution of the programme.

Moreover, this programme was extended to the village without any ground work. No mason is trained in this area to build toilets. In the absence of trained masons, the services could not be executed. The lack of seriousness in formulating and executing the programme has created mistrust among the people towards the programme. Throughout the study process people did not show any confidence or trust in the study. The roadside households, who face acute problems in maintaining privacy while going for defecation felt frustrated as they did not have a piece of land near the house to construct a toilet. These households know that there is no individual solution to their problems but their fellow caste members do not think this way. The high caste people do not want to associate with the service caste and scheduled caste people. The whole village is vertically divided in terms of caste hierarchy. However, adoption of new services like safe drinking water through the installation of handpumps or sanitary services has horizontally divided the caste groups, on the question of proximity to the new water sources, and the physical feasibility of the adoption of sanitary services.

It would be wrong to say that the villagers are not capable of executing a programme or that the adoption of sanitary services was not socially feasible. The villagers desperately needed the sanitary services, the main reason being the maintainance of privacy. But individual interests were taking precedence over common interest. But individual interest can be fulfilled because of the paucity of the basic infrastructure. Perhaps, the this point needed to be articulated in the future,, by the villagers themselves.

adoption of sanitary services, they expected permanent structures with tap water facility. Perhaps, at the initial stage, a few permanent toilets could be constructed which would reinforce the practice and clarify the roles for the maintainence of the services. If the villagers of Vikaspur expect the NGO or the Government to build few permanent toilets for the village, then the poor tribals cannot be expected to contribute. The same is the case for the caste villages with different economic positions. Feasibility in the context of rural Orissa is a matter of provision of services, but this will not be feasible without proper sanitation education, motivation, leadership building and organising. Moreover , sanitation services alone cannot lead anywhere. It has to be related with other developmental programmes. The sanitation service in Medinipur will not be executed properly until other programmes are developed for the village. On the other hand, the villagers of Tamana are now ready for a programme. This readiness and clarity in the division of roles is a direct consequence of their long collective association with community development programmes.

Besides the need articulation and planning for adoption of alternative services, the way the villagers perceived their roles provides some insight on the role of women in water and sanitation programmes. Water and sanitation is a community issue, but the women in all the tribal villages perceived it as their problem. It would be wrong to say that the women in the caste villages also did not perceive it in this way. Perhaps the differential degree of association to the issue is related to the precedence set in each village in terms of collectivization of community needs. In the tribal villages, because of the intervention of the NGO, the villagers have developed a tradition of collective understanding of issues where women are encouraged to take active role. It is also evident that the local women can take an active role in deciding what they want if they receive direct or indirect assurance of acceptability of their opinions. The experience of Tamana and Vikaspur proves this. They realize the extra work they have to take up in maintaining the new services, but they expect creation of services which are long lasting. The woman perceive the services as assets to the community. The way the women of Tamana village proposed the mobilization of local funds by initiating income generating activities, speaks volumes about the potential of women in building long term community services. Perhaps, Tamana is an exception. But given the opportunity, the other village women can also articulate their role in a similar fashion.

Emerging Issues

Orissa

Safe drinking water and environmentally sound sanitary services are not the perceived and expressed need of the peasant and tribal villages of rural Orissa. But sufficient water for household use is the expressed need of all the villages. Sanitary services for maintaining privacy is the most perceived and expressed need of the compact roadside villages, but not so acute in the tribal villges. However, the people were not rigid about their age old practices. People made a distinction between sanitary and other practices and services as per their cultural milieu. Sanitary service, however scientifically designed they may be, is considered profane. This topic is usually discussed with a certain amount of reservation. This is why the people take time to discuss the issue of sanitation, but not the issue of water. Experiences in four villages show that collectivization of community issues are dependent upon many factors. A homogeneous village (viz. Tamana) can go through the process of collectivization faster than a complex hetrogenous village (viz. Medinipur). Seven to eight months of effort could not bring the community together in Medinipur. An organised village with a strong community leader can articulate their requirements and plan in a more systematic way (Tamana village) than the village where the villagers are not organised (Medinipur), or organised but do not have community leaders (Maraibadi).

Services like sanitation are not a priority. No one wants to invest any substantial amount from the family income towards these services. This attitude is independent of the economic position of the household. However, in the caste village, those who are educated and exposed to urban life prefer to invest in toilets, which are more of a status symbol for them. Women who live in the urban areas do not feel comfortable about going outside for defecating along with other women. Community owned services are feasible for adoption in a homogenous community. But it is dependent upon the level of community organisation and nature of local leadership (be it men or women).

Sanitation being a low priority and the services for sanitation being new, despite exposure to various alternative sanitary services, the villagers compared the services to urban services. It may be mentioned here that in a rural village, those who are exposed to urban life influence others. We have seen that in all the villages where people have showed positive response towards

Rajasthan:

Similar attempts were made to organise planning meetings in Rajasthan.

Kanwa:

A collective planning meeting was difficult to organise in Kanwa. The case is similar to that of Medinipur village in Orissa. In the tribal hutments, known as Vedavada, a separate meeting was organised. Though both men and women were involved in the latter stage of the process, only women came for the planning meeting. The reason seems to be obvious. The women of the tribal hutments have already formed a women's group and are working collectively in income generating programmes. This has generated confidence in the men about the potentials of women's groups. Here the women are quite sensitive to the issue of "low cost" but they could not identify any alternative resources to reduce the cost. We did not have any answer either. However, they felt that they could be trained in the masonry skills to construct the toilets. During the construction of the demonstration toilets, few of these women were involved as daily wage labourers to help the mason. The women realised that adoption of sanitation services will increase their workload particularly, collection of water, which means one joda of water for two adult persons in the family... in other words 30 to 40 minutes of more work. However, they preferred to have toilet along with a bathroom at their house. They were not in favour of community toilets. They felt that the community toilets would be installed too far away from the houses and it would be difficult to keep them clean. They expressed that installation of toilets will at least reduce the embarassment of having to go out for defecation during the day, especially for the young girls . Now the question was that if the women were ready to carry water for bathing and to clean the toilets, would we be able to provide the infrastructure to support them? They were willing to build the toilets from local sources. Intensive follow-up needed to be done so that the research could support the community in identifying alternative, low cost resources.

The scarcity of water was a major concern in this village. The women wanted a few more tubewells installed closer to the houses. Their preference for tubewells was because these have a good water source even in summer, whereas the open wells dry up. What the women were concerned about was safe and clean water for their domestic use.

In the caste village the planning meeting was conducted at the cluster level. The scheduled caste women were hesitant to talk about their plans. They were hesitant because they were not sure whether their views might be accepted as being practical. The scheduled caste cluster did not have any leader. Decisions were made for them by the high caste villagers. But no one took care of their felt needs. One woman remarked, "For the first time we are being asked to give our opinion". They made it clear that a few toiltes for their community will solve their problems of going out for defecation to other people's fields. The entire scheduled cast cluster face a lot of problems in fetching water in summer. They are dpendent on one tubewell. The caste barriers prevent these people from fetching from the tubewells or private wells owned by the high caste. The local women pleaded for a



WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN PLANS

quick solution to this problem. They asked the research team to request government to do the needful.

In the caste clusters of the village, three meetings were organised. One meeting each was conducted exclusively for men and women and the third meeting was organised jointly. Some women formed an informal group in the village during the study process and asked to meet the team separately. Most of these women were married and their husbands work outside the village, coming home only on the weekends. They expressed that they would like to adopt individual toilets which will reduce the problems of going out for defecation during the day. However, they felt that they could be involved in some income generating programmes by which they could share the household economic burden. The men folk were all interested in having a readymade programme, rather than trying to understand the rationale of the programme. Every one was expressing their individual problems. They took it for granted that the feasibility study was a prelude to the implementation of a programme. Such expectation created a number of difficulties for the research team eliciting participation from the men in planning the programme. Perhaps more educational work needs to be provided to eradicate this attitude of dependency .

In this village two demonstration toilets were constructed by the local NGO, one on the premises of the school and other at the dispensary. The men expected that such toilets would be constructed at their individual houses. Such extension of frees services only reinforces the cycle of dependency. The joint meeting also did not yield much result. Though the need was perceived, the people were not ready for any common solution. Few individual families were interested to adopt toilets at their own cost if the necessary infrastructure was provided to them. But a large section of the caste village expected a free scheme just to avoid the embarassment of having to go out for defecation.

Chundavada

This was a well attended meeting. The women expressed their problems about the shortage of water. They felt the need of the toilets but made it clear that without sufficient water supply the toilets cannot be adopted. Both high caste women and tribal women opted for individual toilets and bathrooms. Those who were aware of the existing government programmes requested the team to help them in planning a project for them. But no family was ready to spend money from their own budget. However, a few tribal women suggested that if such a programme can be started in their village then they can earn some money by working on the construction. All the clusters complained about the shortage of water. The water problem was so acute that the women were not concerned about the unhygienic and dirty state of the water in

the ponds from which the local tap water was supplied... dirty water was better than no water at all.

Moder

In Moder, till this point of collective thinking, the question of privacy took precedence. Installation of toilets and bathrooms were the requirements. A woman, referring to the demonstration toilet bathroom, said, "We do not need such a huge structure. We need a simple one". Definitely a big huge brick structure for toilet/bathroom would be imposing in front of the small thatched huts. But they did not have any alternatives before them. Like the other villages, the villages here also did not want to spen any of their own money. However, they are yet to explore the possible alternatives for low cost tiolets and bathrooms. The problem of shortage of water to keep the toilets clean was perceived by both the men and women. The men clearly felt, though, that the resposibility of keeping the toilets clean would be the women's. The women, in spite of apprehending the extra work that this would involve in terms of fetching water, etc., accepted the responsibility without question.

Taleyan

The need for toilets here was perceived as an individual need to maintain privacy. But the water problem first needed to be resolved. This is so acute in this village that the women felt that it would be impossible to keep the toilets clean. In summer, the handpumps dry up in this hilly village. The community wells, located in the lower lands, are the only source of water. However, the villagers felt that if the toilets were installed near the community wells, it would not serve their purpose because the wells were too far away from the households. In times of urgent need it would be difficult for the villagers to use toilets which were so far away. Therefore, in this village, without solving the water problem, the question of toilets cannot be broached.

Emerging Issues

Contrary to the villages of Orissa, in the Rajasthan villages the sanitation issue needs to be seen as an individual requirement. Despite the homogeinity of the tribal villages, the collectivization did not reinforce the acceptance of community toilets. The distance between the households, added to the villager's concern for privacy, gave rise to individual-oriented services. As in Orissa, the villagers of Rajasthan did not want to invest since it was a low priority of investment. But it was

surprising to note that the villagers did not want costly structures for the toilet. Perhaps, because of the successive drought and the ensuing pressure to earn enough for the household expenses, the villagers think it is a waste to invest large amounts on sanitation services.

But it is clear that past practice and attitude is not an inhibiting factor in the adoption of sanitary services. The villagers do not understand the logic of the presence of germs and viruses in the water which spread infectious diseases. For them, privacy is the only factor for adoption. The sanitation question can only be realised in the long run. "If some women go out for defecation behind a bush while going to work, one should not say this is an indication of the failure of the programme", said an elderly woman. But unless the water problems are solved, it will be difficult to implement toilets. It is interesting to note, that in all the villages, though both men and women realized the extra burden involved in collecting water for maintenance of the toilets, it was presumed by the men that this will be the resposibility of the women. In the planning, the village men expected free services. It is yet to be seen how the men are going to allow the women to take the decisions about implementing the programme, when it actually starts. Concern for privacy seems to be related to the social status, education and exposure to urban areas. This is the reason the caste village men and women are more concerned about the toilets. Privacy is neither a basic need nor a derived need. This is the reason perhaps no one is willing to spend money. Identifying alternative means in order to reduce the costs will be a very difficult task ahead.

Rural Water and Sanitation: Issues and Context

Although much has been said in the previous section about rural water and sanitation, perhaps it would be appropriate to look at the issues within their particular context. In rural India, water and sanitation is perceived through a cultural polar dichotomy - water is pure and sanitation is impure. Water purifies the impure. This dichotomy cuts across regions, culture, education, castes, etc. This rural concept of pure/impure clarifies the knowledge, attitude and practices concerning water and sanitation.

The rural concept of pure water means that the water must look clean, and should be kept in a clean place (for example, the kitchen); physical contact with impure water will make it impure. Impure means that the water does not look clean, and can be kept anywhere, away from the 'clean' areas of the house. Using this logic, rural people look at clean water as pure. There is no concept of safe water. River water, however contaminated it might be, if it looks clean, it is regarded as clean, and is used as drinking water. Water used for cooking and drinking has to be pure. It is kept in clean vessels. However, water used for general cleaning need not be pure. This is the reason in rural households the kitchen water is kept in special vessels after cleaning and the general water is stored in ordinary vessels. Nobody is allowed to touch the kitchen water, particularly women, if they are contaminated in social terms. The concept of contamination in social terms is related to the concept of purity and pollution within the caste society. Defecation makes a person impure. This is why most woman change their clothes before going for defecation. Entry to the kitchen is banned to women wearing the same clothes in which they go for defecation. However, young children are allowed to enter the kitchen in the same clothes in which they go for defecation. The standards for social contamination are stringent for women.

Contamination is more of a socio-cultural concept rather than a scientific concept. This is the reason why although drinking water and water for the kitchen is collected by women after changing into fresh clothes or after a bath, no effort is made to filter the water or cover the water once it is stored at home. The water for general use and cleaning are collected without having to purify oneself. This water is kept outside the house. Similarly, since human feaces are considered as impure, the act of defecation is done far away from home. The socio-cultural distancing between pure and impure, sacred and profane provides a set of classifications of degrees of cleanliness within the precincts of the house. The kitchen is considered to be the cleanest place and the degree of cleanliness reduces the further one goes from the kitchen - outside the house, the waste disposal area, water resources, village roads and drainage and so on. This is why the maintenance of tubewells and community wells is very low in their list of priorities.

The basic needs of the people are reflections of their cultural milieu which shapes their practices. In the villages of Rajasthan the women face hardship in collection of water. However, it was noticed that the people are not concerned about safe water. Similarly, sanitation per se is not perceived as a basic problem. The problem of maintaining privacy, particularly while defecating, is the basic concern.

The basic need for maintenance of privacy is again culturally structured. Privacy is a more of a concern to women, more so for the young girls and adult women than for children and old women. Perhaps this is a result of the purdha system. Men openly go out and defecate in the fields without any problems. However, some men feel concerned about the lack of privacy which the women face when they go out for defecation. In the compact roadside caste village, the women go in groups for defecation in the evening, so that the reason for their going is obvious and no male members will pass that way, and privacy is maintained. In the tribal villages, the women prefer to go alone for defecating since it is easier for a single person to hide under a tree.

Keeping the aspect of privacy in mind, many women in Rajasthan prefered to have toilets and bathrooms together. In Rajasthan, the young and adult women bathe at home. In Orissa, the village women generally bathe in the ponds, where specific spots are alloted for men and women. Perhaps, because of this allocation of space, the women in the Orissa villages do not face any problems of lack of privacy while taking their baths at the place alloted to them. But our study shows that, beside the cultural factor, the concern for privacy is also related to the level of education, degree of exposure, etc.

Though privacy is perceived as a need, no family, whether upper caste or lower caste, in the caste village or tribal village, in Orissa or Rajasthan, was willing to invest any money to meet this need. The concept of privacy has a lower position in the hierarchy of basic needs. These basic needs are material, whereas the concept of privacy is a cultural concept. So, for the toilets to be adopted, privacy as a cultural concept has to be emphasized. It was also seen that men take full control when it is an issue of material concern. They are interested only upto the stage of the construction of the toilets. The question of maintenance automatically fell into the purview of women.

Although the adoption of sanitation services is inbuilt in the concept of privacy, the nature and form of adoption varies in terms of community compositions, level of community homogeniety and organizing, topography, village economy etc. Other variables which indirectly influence adoption are education, exposure, social status etc. In homogenous villages like Tamana and Vikaspur in Orissa, the villagers preferred community toilets, whereas a similar community in Maraibadi did not want community toilets. Despite homogenity, the process of collectivisation of community issue is more important, and this is generally harnessed through group building. On the other hand, in the homogenous tribal villages, even though women have formed groups, they did not want community toilets. In this case the topography and scattered nature of the village forced the women to opt for individual toilets. In the caste village, simple cultural distinctions between different castes do not allow the option for community toilets. The cultural caste distinctions are so deep rooted that even if the caste village women form

groups, they will still not opt for community toilets. The same caste groups even do not opt for community toilets because of the relative differential social status acquired through education, exposure to urban life, etc. Though the roadside villages have problems of privacy, the space for individual toilet is not available.

The preferences for the design and cost are also dependent variables. It was noticed that the villagers were not in a position to comment on the design of the toilet. The demonstration of the construction of toilets in Rajasthan, and the sanitation exposure visits in Orissa, reveal that people cannot comment on the choice of design unless they are used to different types of toilet. But the double pit toilet seems to be more acceptable as people want to have long term services.

The tribal villagers of Orissa opted for a 'pucca' structure for the community toilets, whereas the tribal community of Rajasthan opted for ordinary structures for individual toilets. But in both the cases there was no readymade solution to lower the cost. The villagers were ready to contribute labour. No doubt the voluntary donation of labour will reduce the cost, but there are no guidelines at present on how to harness local resources to build the toilets at a low cost. Some experimentation by both NGOs and the respective government agencies will perhaps provide the indicators for this.



MY GLASS OF WATER IS CLEAN !

I. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP:

BEYOND THE PROCESS: EMERGING METHODOLOGY

It is the mandate of the study to decipher what a feasibility study means, particulalrly in the context of participatory research principles. At the outset, we must confess our ambivalence and dilemmas in pursuing the process. Perhaps, it is necessary to understand how the participatory process was initiated and what we have learnt during the study process. From the beginning, the underlying assumption was not to develop a blueprint to make the programme feasible but to initiate a process whereby people can make feasible programmes for themselves.

It is important to start by recognizing the fact that the process elaborated in the previous pages is just a part of a broader process. The enlisted process might not be the complete representation of a people's responses to water and sanitation issues, since in reality people do not fragment issues, as this report has done. No society is static; the process of collective investigation and analysis is a contionous process, which often gets thwarted either due to non-recognition of the process or due to the counter forces which nullify the validity of the process. The process needs to be started where the people are.

Broadly two elements arise out of the process which help to delineate the methodology of the feasibility study. The first is widespread , where people's activities and initiatives are supported by the NGO. The second is limited, but fairly common - people living with their own reality without the support of any development-intervention agency. In the first instance, people have been articulating the relevance of participation through education and organizing themselves around issues . In other words, in the first context, people are preparing to participate in their own development. Whereas people in the second instance do not have such a direct experience.

In the above two contexts, it is clear that the process of participatory feasibility assesment is not a process of remodelling a programme to suit the conditions, but a process whereby people identify their problems and their causes, try to analyse the problems and their context, and develop capabilities to search for relevant solutions and act on them . This process cannot be an apriori, neatly determined process. It varies within the context of time and existing situations of a particular society. The twleve villages in both Orissa and Rajasthan taken at the initial stage, and the final eight villages taken at the end of the study provides us some insights on the methods of assesing social feasibility.

First and foremost, the assumption of the problem in the minds of the programme executor or planner need not necessarily be the

same as that of the local people. In this context the first effort is to make the issue or problem explicit through the process of identifying the problem. It may be

- recognised and expressed;

- recognised but not expressed;

- not recognised and not expressed.

The first condition arises where the problem is manifest and comes in the way of people's basic need. Our experience in rural Orissa and Rajasthan has shown that the issue of water and sanitation falls under the last two categories. When the problem is lower down in the priority of needs, it is not given social recognition. In this context it is necessary to link all the problems. In both Orissa and Rajasthan the community recognised the problem of sanitation after effort was made to enumerate the various societal problems. But this recognition of the problem may not be in the same language as is understood by the experts or other communities. The community's requirment is primary. The value structure, attitude and practices define the nature of requirement. As we have seen in rural Orissa and Rajasthan, the community perceived the problem of sanitation as an issue of lack of privacy, and the problem of water in terms of its unavailability.

Perhaps, the negation of the expression of this requirement could have created apathy among the people to participate in the process. The process clearly shows that in Rajasthan, despite the educational input on health and sanitary hygiene, people had difficulty in associating sanitation services with community health. This does not mean that people cannot relate to other causes if they do not affect their basic need. The experience of Tamana and Vikaspur in Orissa makes it evident that peoples' past experience of relating a particular issue with other issues helps in accelerating the process. In other words, to make the issue explicit, the study process should make extra effort to create an atmosphere community learning and provide opportunities where people can look at the issues as they perceive them.

No community looks at their problem in an isolated way. If a community is looking at one issue, other issues are bound to come up. A feasibility study carried out by an outsider often faces the problem of relating the various issues together. The initial methodological dilemma we faced at the level of conceptualization of the study, and later during the process, highlights this. If people are going to talk about other issues and their expectations are aroused during the process, then the study should have inbuilt space to take care of the emerging concerns. Secondly, the process of articulation of the issue does not follow any fixed paradigm, nor does articulation bring out any mathematically determinant cause for the solution of the

issue. We have noticed that a group of women in Kanwa village of Rajasthan articulated their household economic position and sought some income generating activities to ameliorate this situation while discussing the sanitation issue. This reasserts the importance of interpreting the issues, as they arise.

In the process of selection of villages, enough caution was taken to ensure follow-up of the emerging issues. The feasibility study cannot be limited to the issues of water and sanitation only. This process will only alienate people. A random selection of villages where the study does not have the capacity to ensure follow-up action may reduce the people into mere objects of the study, and the research team could take the central role. In a feasibility study, people remain in the centre of the process. During the process of the study every step was tentative. The mandate of the people gave concrete shape to the process. In the identification of problems and in the process of investigation of their causes, belief in the validity of people's experience is imperative.

In the process, investigation, analysis and action are not three independent components but are all interlinked. The experience of village Tamana establishes this. However, there are many factors which influence the interpretation of these three components. The village Maraibadi has the same social structure, value systems and practices as that of Tamana. But the villagers have been involved in many community organizations. A close look at the process reveals that the villagers of Maraibadi could not interpret the collective analysis into collective action because of the absence of community leadership. Building up of community leadership helps in the process of taking community decisions.

The comparison between the process in the caste village and tribal villages in Rajasthan and Orissa reveals the difference in the process of collectivizing community needs. The process of collectivization of interest sets the stage for collective investigation and analysis. The educational level, economic position and value structure are not determinant factors. The tribal villages have a low level of education and low economic base compared to the caste villages. Despite this, the tribal villagers collectivized their interest faster than the caste villagers. Perhaps homogenity of the community helps to build collectivization of interest, but the comparison between the Orissa tribal villages and Rajasthan tribal villages, and the villages in Rajasthan where women have formed groups, clearly shows that the formation of people's forum brings people together. To pursue the process, the study should build up capacity within itself to organise people.

But collective investigation cannot be coerced. It can either be spontaneous or induced. It can be facilitated if people are given a chance to start looking at their own problems and share one anothers' feelings. When people feel uncomfortable or incompetent to initiate the investigation process, the role of

the research team is crucial. Capacity building cannot be initiated by merely providing educational input or training. The researcher needs to be sensitive to the issue and should respect the people's perceptions. Based on this, the researcher should prepare the training method. But people might not accept the trainer role of the researchers, as happened in the caste villges of both Orissa and Rajasthan. The experience of other villages show that the research team can derive its legitimacy by instilling confidence in the people that their analysis can only bring right solutions. The research process should be able to reinforce the belief among the people that their knowledge is authentic and they can develop solutions for their problems. In this case the close association of both the NGOs with the local tribal people in their own development provided the legitimacy. If the local NGOs were not involved in the investigative process, it could have taken a long time to establish our legitimacy. Meaningful collective investigation is possible when the environment around the people has empowering elements.

Besides developing inbuilt mechanisms to promote community forums and community leadership inside the study, the method of dissemination of information and data collection needs to be carried out with appropriate tools which are close to peoples' world view, or close to the context of the people. It may be noted here that the tools used in the study process were very simple - group discussions, cluster meetings, educational exposure and open-ended surveys. The primary aim of the method was to increase the capability of people to pose the problem, relate it to their life situation and look for alternative solution. The design of the methods also have to take into account the possibility of use of the methods by the people themselves in the future. Any sophisticated method which the people are not used to may generate high expectations, and, after the study process when such methods are not used, people may not give importance to the tools used by the local resources. It may be remembered that during the consultation with the Orissa NGO animators, they emphasized that they would like to develop and use methods which they would feel confident about and can use in the future.

In support of the argument, perhaps it is appropriate to mention here that the sanitary health education in the Rajasthan village was not very productive. The efficacy of the method is not the method, per se, but the judicial choice of the method in the context of the people. In our context: in Rajasthan villages, the people did not have any experience of learning about community issues through charts, posters, etc. and group discussions. In order to make the educational process meaningful and effective, a structured situation was created where the people's questions were used as the basis to form a questionnaire. The purpose was to elicit response from the people about their understanding of the issue, and its relation with other issues. The tools cannot be the same for all situations. But what is important is that, whatever the tools and methods used, the ultimate aim should be to generate an atmosphere that is both stimulating and unthreatening.

In a feasibility study, the last step is the process of need resolution. This is the stage when the need identification and the knowledge articulated for alternative solution by the people, takes final shape. Besides continuation of the process of group building and developing community leadership, the method of need resolution needs special attention. During the process of need resolution, people develop some expectations of the external agency in terms of extension of services. Our experience makes it clear that whatever the cultural and economic background may be, people look at a feasibility study as a prelude to the extension of services by some government and non-government agency. Historically, the surveys and various researches have assured expectations. We notice that people who are more exposed and educated tend to look at the process of investigation as a first step to render services. In this sense the feasibility study should break this cycle of dependency. This cycle inhibits the peoples' capability to develop solution using their own knowledge base

We noticed that people face difficulties when the needs resolution requires a certain amount of technological understanding to which they have not been exposed. People resolve issues when the resources related to the resolution are in easy reach. In the villages where the people came together to frame action plans, they could not think about the technological aspect of the plan but felt reasonably comfortable to allocate roles to build the programme and manage the services. For a rational division of labour, the study should pay attention to the sexual bias in the conventional division of labour. Perhaps, in rural Indian villages, the roles should be discussed collectively instead of focussing separately among groups of men and women. The men need to become aware of the potential role of women in household economy.

It may be noted that the criteria of needs resolution is assessed by the people by their world view. The research method needs to aim at widening this world view and provide opportunities for the

people so that they can develop their capacity to resolve their own problems. The villagers of Orissa were insistent about permanent structures for the toilets whereas the people of Rajasthan were insistent about any service as per their social context. Perhaps, given the opportunity to handle various alternatives, the people could have determined the appropriate nature of the technology and infrastructure. A social feasibility process can only be completed if people are given an opportunity to determine what they want. If the villagers of Tamana ask for sanitary toilets with tap water for their community, they must get an opportunity to be exposed to this, and simultaneously, they should also be made aware of other types of services. It is very difficult at this point to define whether knowledge of alternative services should be provided first or whether the opportunity to use the desired services should be made available first. In Rajasthan, when the people articulated the resolution of a need, they did not find any alternatives to reduce the cost even though they wanted to do this. Perhaps, the extension of the services will reinforce their capability in determining new dimensions viz. low cost, proper maintainence, and household contribution related to a particular service.

In a nutshell, the present exercise reveals that a social feasibility study is not a mere study by itself. It is a part of a broader, continuous process. Feasibility is determined by the community's position in a particular time and context. Those who are associated with the people on an ongoing basis are the legitimate practitioners of a social feasibility study. The external agency can only provide relevant facilitation and educational input which again needs to be put within the proper perspective and framework. The attitudes and values of a society are structurally determined. This affects the perception of the problem. The language used in the articulation of the problem might differ. We can now say with confidence that in rural India, the adoption of toilets can only be feasible if it is understood through their value rationalization. A feasibility is dependent upon the understanding of the people. It is also dependent on the process whereby people relate to other issues and develop the capacity to collectivize individual needs. No method is absolute. The nuances of the method will vary from context to context and situation to situation. But the process taken up in Orissa and Rajasthan provides the mandate that the feasibility of a programme is dependent upon the process whereby people are educated, organised and enthused to collectivize their interests, and encouraged to look at the issue as they themselves see it.

Follow-up:

In this context, if the NGOs and the government are serious about extending sanitation services in rural India, they need to respond to the suggestions, ideas and proposals of the people in general, and the women in particular. Some specific suggestions which have emerged from this study in the context of Orissa and Rajasthan may be also valid in a wider context, particularly while implementing a programme. These are:

1. A cultural, attitudinal and informational reorientation of their field staff is a key prerequisite for effective follow-up. Sanitation is to be accepted and understood as a development issue, with a sense of openness and maturity on their part.

2. Specific follow-up action for design and construction of individual or collective toilets and bathing facilities should be made in different villages. However, the question of finance needs to be resolved. It is clear that villagers are not interested in spending their money on this. Additional resources have to be mobilized for those villages where the people, particulalrly the women, are ready to move ahead.

3. Details of maintenance of new sanitation facilities should be worked out with the local groups of men and women, so that maintenance is seen as an inbuilt component of the facility.

4. Where villagers are not yet able to move ahead collectively, some educational process needs to be further sustained for a period of time. This should assist in their decision-making process.

5. In instances where women are keen to move ahead, but men are indifferent or hostile to the programme, some ways to initiate the programme have to be carefully devised. The main obstacles to women moving forward will be lack of finance. In order to sustain women's motivitaion and commitment, concrete programme implementation appears crucial, and, perhaps finances should be arranged by the local NGOs.

It is hoped that the NGOs will sustain the process initiated by the study and follow-up specifically on some concrete ideas and requests that women of some villages in Orissa and Rajasthan have made.

J. PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL FESIBILITY STUDY: SOME KEY ASPECTS

In this concluding section we outline some key aspects of the Participatory Social Feasibility Study Process and Methodology as highlighted through this concrete experience of developing and implementing the methodology in Orissa and Rajasthan in the context of provisions of sanitation services, with special focus on participation of women in elaborating such services. The experience of this practice has highlighted various aspects of this methodology which are briefly summarised below:

1. Participatory social feasibility study for designing, developing and implementing a given development programme, be it sanitation, drinking water or any other, has to be viewed as a starting point in the process of developing broad outlines of a given programme. The question of feasibility of a programme like sanitation is not to be assessed in mere economic terms but also in social terms. This means that the particular socio-cultural and political context of a given situation needs to be understood and analysed to assess whether the programme is feasible or not. The component of participatory social feasibility implies that the assessment of feasibility is not a one-sided affair by programme planners and implementers, be they governmental or non-governmental. It implies that poeple who are going to utilise and benefit from that particular programme are going to be central actors in determining feasibility. This does not imply mere ritualistic participation by the people in a programme already planned and outlined by implementing agencies. Such a ritualistic understanding of participation will make the entire feasibility assessment a mechanical exercise and not an organic and empowering experience. It is our contention that the essence of participatory social feasibility methodology is an empowering process for local communities and women in particular, such that they can begin to take responsibility for elaborating,designing, implementing and monitoring their own development programmes.

2. The second crucial aspects in this methodology is to consider, analyse and understand the history of participation and the participatory process in a given situation. As our experience has shown, past experience and history of participation by local people, in particular poor women, determines the ease of their involvement in assessing feasibility of a new programme. Where a history of people's empowerment already exists, either through the efforts of a non-governmental or a governmental agency, people's inovlvement in furthering the participatory process to a new issue, problem or development area can be easily facilitated. Where such a history of participation, individually and collectively by poor women, does not exist, promoting their participation becomes a major initial task in the feasibility study. Therefore, explicit and sufficient attention to this needs

to be paid early on in the study if it has to become a participatory social feasibility study in its real sense.

3. This implies that another factor to understand and analyse is the nature of local organisations and groups, particularly of poor women. Where collective efforts by women have already been made in response to any social or economic issue in the area, and some rudimentary forms of local organisations of women have emerged and been built upon, initiating and sustaining a participatory social feasibility study as an empowering process becomes easier in such a context. Emerging leadership of women helps in taking decisions regarding the design and implementation of the study. In situations where such groups do not exist, and where women's leadership has not emerged, sufficient attention needs to be paid to building women's groups and supporting the emergence of capable leadership among them. This is an important aspect if a participatory social feasibility methodology is to be implemented and ensured.

4. In this sense the experience also suggests that the study of feasibility of a new programme like sanitation may entail not merely an exercise in collection of existing information and analysing that information, but also providing additional information. If women have to play an active role in identifying the causes of the problem and developing solutions to resolve that problem, like unhygienic sanitory conditions in a village, they need to have information about the way other groups of women have solved similar problems elsewhere, the available models and respective technology, cost, design, resources and materials used, etc. If women do not have the possibility of understanding various alternatives, and if they have not seen or heard of these alternatives before, then the choice of their solutions will be very resticted and not an informed one. As a consequence, a feasibility study of this type must create the opportunity for women to acquire additional information about various sanitory facilities available and being implemented elsewhere. This could be done in various ways - by bringing resource persons, by showing charts, pictures, audio-visuals, designs, through exposure visits of women to such locations where a programme of this type has been implemented, through demonstrations by setting up an experimental facility, etc.

There is another important contribution of the educational process in ensuring the participatory social feasibility methodology. The intervention through an educational process is to be seen as an integral part of participatory social feasibility study also because the values and attitudes of local women as well as field-workers of non-governmental agencies could substantialy inhibit the process of discussion analysis and reflection on an issue, as has been seen in this experience. The cultural inhibitions of field workers in raising the issue and working on the problems of sanitation in particular projects had to be handled through an intensive educational process of workshops, meetings and discussions. Only when such an educational intervention had effectively encouraged the motivation of field workers could the unfolding of the feasibility process start. Thus it is important to consider building into the feasibility process educational inputs/interventions particularly in the early stages. Providing sufficient attention and resources to initiate and sustain an educational intervention as part of a participatory social feasibility study appears to be a key aspect to its effective implementation.

5. Social and cultural factors seem to be a specific consideration in designing and conducting a feasibility study. As was the case in the above practice, attitudes of women towards sanitation, toilets and drinking water were to be understood as a starting point to develop and sustain the feasibility study. Therefore, discussions on sanitation invariably move towards discussions on cleanliness or drinking water. Special efforts had to be made to overcome the sense of embarassment among the local women and the NGO animators. The second aspect that needed to be understood was that the major role in acquisition, storage and use of drinking water is played by rural women. Similarly the major concern - having a sanitary toilet facility - was that of the women. They were most concerned about the privacy of defecation and looked at the possibility of this programme to solve this problem which they daily experience. Men, by and large, were quite apathetic to this rural sanitation programme and did not show much interest except to explore the possibility of getting some free services or subsidy from the government or the NGOs in regard to this or any other development programme. Still, as part of the social feasibility study, men had to be involved in such a way that they not only understood the issues in respect to rural sanitation and drinking water, but also did not hinder the process of women's participation in the elaboration of the feasibility study. This is a key aspect in many rural areas, particularly in those situations where caste and religion dominate. In some cases men had to be persuaded to allow the process of women's participation in the feasibility study to continue. Therefore, the design of the study has to take into account the possibility of not only interacting with women separately on an individual and collective basis, but also with men separately, as well as creating occasions for joint exploration of the issue, however difficult that exercise may be.

As was evident in the planning stage of the feasibility study conducted in this case, it became difficult for women to commit themselves to a concrete follow-up in the absence of any clarity about financial support to sanitation programmes. Since women do not control the financial resource of the family they needed men s support and concurrence for any such initiative if the family had to contribute some money in this regard. It is in this context also that the design and implementation of a social feasibility study must insure participation of men in a way that they can help sustain and strengthen the participation of women as key actors in this process.

6. Within the context of developing a feasibility study on sanitation and drinking water issues in a given situation, the study must explore the possibility of linkages with other issues and problems in the area. A study that narrowly and exclusively focusses on sanitation without exploring the linkages with availability of water, availability of finance, the economic status of people, the status of women in the family and in the community etc., will only come up with incomplete and perhaps distorted ideas and solutions. It is in this context that the above experience has interestingly enough highlighted, at the suggestion of the women themselves, the need to link sanitation facilities with income-generating programmes. In situations where women were concerned about improving the sanitation status in the village and the family, where they were keen to build a toilet and a bath at the individual and community levels, and where they had little or no access to resources to do so, they were willing to experiment with creating income-generating opportunities for themselves such that an improved sanitation facility could be installed and maintained in their homes and villages. Such an approach can substantially provide the opportunity to build organic links at the base between different development services and programmes of the government and non-govenmental agencies available in a given community. Thus, exploring linkages horizontally with other development programmes and services, and keeping the scope of the feasibility study open and broad enough to allow for information from other issues and problems to be included, appears to be a key aspect of such a feasibility study methodology.

7. Our experiences clearly demonstrated that a feasibility study must include the participation of local women and men. The process not only informs the women but also motivates them as a consequence of their central participation in the study itself. This motivation helps in sustaining the study and in designing the follwo-up in terms of concrete programmes. But it also implies that expectations for follow-up and development of concrete facilities of sanitation are raised as a direct consequence of their participation in the study. Thus a participatory social feasibility study needs to take into account, in the design itself, a base to respond to such expectations. It is in this context that the decisions to involve a local non-governmental organisation right from the beginning in designing and implementing the study ensured the possibility of ongoing support and concrete follow-up. It appears that this perhaps should be considered as a key aspect in designing a participatory social feasibility study around rural sanitaion issues. The issue of mobilization and follow-up becomes crucial where women are concerned because once empowered and motivated, they move more assuredly and rapidly to the concrete implementation stage. It is not merely an ethical question where the study leads to expectatons which are left unfulfilled. It is also a practical question such that the potential of the study in motivating and empowering women could be fully utilised if supportive structures through an NGO or government agencies or people's organisations are available locally to follow-up on the process on an ongoing basis.

8. And finally, the process of participatory social feasibility study as elaborated in the practice described above seems to be be a complex one. Participatory social study methodology, with all its nuances and aspects and characteristics, appears to be an intensive involvement of those involved in designing and facilitating the study. Their involvement requires competence and skills not merely in data collection analysis, but in sustaining participation of women and providing the educational inputs and in ensuring the follow-up. The experience also suggests, that, in various stages, the study can be a frustrating and demoralizing experience and requires an unending amount of patience, tolerance and internal energy for the facilitating team to continue and sustain the process to its logical conclusion. The experience has also highlighted that participatory social feasibility study methodology cannot be a priori, bound in time by the facilitating team itself. The needs and concerns, the demands and aspirations, of local women also substantially influences the manner in which the process unfolds, particularly in terms of the time it takes. In both Rajasthan and Orissa, issues of drought and shortage of food became so paramount. On the one hand, the enthusiasm of women and men became so aroused in some situations that the initial time planning of the study could not succeed. The meetings to develop plans for follow-up action could only occur in October and followed-up in November 1987. As a consequence, such a methodology can also become a highly expensive effort. It belies the notion that participatory social feasibility study could be an inexpensive process. Linked to this issue is the issue of the role of the facilitating team. The team responsible for designing and conducting the participatory social feasibility study had to play several roles, and data collection analysis is only a small part of that role. As mentioned earlier, the facilitation of the process of participation of women, building their groups and sustaining the growth of their leadership, of providing educational inputs to women and field workers, are also important roles that such a team must play if this methodology is to be effectively implemented.

It is this complexity of the requirement of the participatory social feasibility methodology that may make it prohibitive and difficult to be implemented in different situations. But it is hoped that the positive outcomes of such a methodology will far outweigh the investments made in initiating and sustaining it.

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