



SEHGAL
FOUNDATION

Training Manual
Engaging the Community
for **Sustainability** of
Development Projects
in Villages







Training Manual

Engaging the Community for Sustainability of Development Projects in Villages





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PREFACE

With the enactment of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Act in 2013, the funding scenario for nonprofits has changed in the last decade. The funding for a range of development activities has varied from Rs. 24,689 crores in 2019 FY to Rs. 8828/ crores in 2021 FY. Indian companies have spent nearly Rs. 1 trillion since the law came into effect. Moreover, crores of rupees are being spent through philanthropic foundations and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act grants. Most of the projects are given to the implementing agencies for two–three years only. This means that implementing agencies enter into the new area and exit it once the project ends. Thereafter, assets such as schools, drinking water facilities, check dams, livelihood interventions, etc., need to be sustained by the community or the gram panchayat or a local urban body of the area. If the community or gram panchayat or local urban body does not have the capacity to maintain the projects, the projects are likely to gradually decline after some years, and the money spent may not have created sustainable assets or projects in the area.

Since the durations of these projects are short-lived, i.e. two years mostly, some community-based interventions need to be taken up as part of all projects, even brick and mortar projects, so that stakeholders at the community level will understand the importance of taking ownership of the projects after the project period ends. Regular capacity building of the gram panchayat, with awareness sessions in ward sabha / gram sabha, orients the community about the process of change ushered in the area by the projects and the need for community to “own” the projects. It is not reasonable to expect that a community will automatically own a project when starting some development work in their area. This ownership does not happen on its own. Systematic capacity building and awareness generation must be done with community-based institutions at the village level in order build a community’s perspective on sustainability.

Some pathways for sustainability initiatives in the project areas have been described along with participatory tools in the training guide, but a community can devise more sustainability initiatives on their own within their context. The objective of the training guide is to trigger collective action for sustainability by the community in a project area, so that people will continue to reap the benefits of any development project done for their benefit.

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Sustainability: Rational and Process





SUSTAINABILITY: RATIONALE AND PROCESS

The objective of sustainability in the projects focused on integrated village development, agriculture, and water is to engage and motivate villagers and gram panchayat members to maintain the assets created in the project and adopt the interventions of the projects, so that they can continue to get benefits after the project is over. In addition, more villagers may adopt the successful interventions, learning from the experience of fellow villagers. Villagers will also learn the methods for working in convergence with Krishi Vigyan Kendras, the gram panchayat, and government departments, in order to find ways to better access the welfare benefits of government schemes.

To best understand the interventions of sustainability, it is important to define sustainability with respect to development projects carried out by Sehgal Foundation in the villages: “sustainability” is a dynamic and continuous process to build capacity and ownership of a community regarding the development projects, so that a community receives the benefits of the projects for number of years. The community scales up the projects with its own resources or leverage funds from the government for doing the same. The social dimension of sustainability, one the three dimensions of sustainability namely environmental, economy and social is the key theme of this training manual. Environmental and economy dimensions of sustainability are given adequate consideration in project designing stage, hence these dimensions are not discussed here.

Sustainability is not one-time exercise, rather it is a dynamic and continuous process of institutional building and capacity building at the community level, which needs to be carried out for two–three years in the project area. This includes institution building, capacity building of institutions on the planned process of change as envisaged in the project; implementing

the project interventions with villagers; participatory assessment of the project by the villagers; gender mainstreaming in the gram panchayat, ward sabha, and agriculture; and convergence with gram panchayats, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and government departments.

Process of Sustainability

The VCCS model of sustainability includes:

- V: Village Development Committee (farmers’ group, women’s group, water management committee, tank user group, or any community-based institution formed in the village where a project is being implemented)
- C: Capacity development of Village Development Committee
- C: Convergence with local institutions, gram panchayat, and government departments
- S: Sustainability efforts to main assets and the adoption of development interventions

The model can help team members understand the process of sustainability and implement it in their project areas. The VCCS model can be adapted or changed by the project team as per the context within the overall objective of sustainability as defined above.

VCCS Model Components

- 1. Formation of Village Development Committee (VDC):** Twenty to twenty-five community leaders are chosen with the consent of communities for a Village Development Committee (farmers’ group, women’s group, water management committee, tank user group, or any community-based institution formed in the village where project is being implemented). The nomenclature of VDC

may change per project requirements; the key message is working with a community-based institution in the project village. The representation of all sections of society, especially women and deprived sections, and elected representatives of village institutions such as gram panchayats and school management committees should be ensured in the VDC. Community leaders who can give time, have a passion for village development, and are trustworthy should find presence in the VDC. VDC should have a critical mass to influence changes in the village.

2. Capacity development of VDC: Capacity building should focus on building the perspective of development and ownership, benefits of the project, maintenance of created infrastructure, components of the project, gender mainstreaming in local institutions and development initiatives, and participatory assessment of development initiatives. VDC will be the support group for projects in the village, which means they will have a critical role in the selection of beneficiaries, choosing the locations of infrastructure construction, getting non-objection certificates from government departments, and building linkages with local institutions and government departments. The VDC is the pilot of a project during and after the project period.
3. Convergence with local institutions, gram panchayats, and government departments: VDCs must also work in collaboration with local institutions, gram panchayats, and government departments, so that support for the development initiatives in the village can be gathered. The VDC should invite these stakeholders for special events, such as Environment Day, educate all children, renovation of e-resource center or aaganwadi center, and save girl children. VDCs should be creative enough to find ways to engage with these stakeholders, so

that long-term relationships are built. This will help VDCs prioritize their development needs in the village and get funds for its implementation.

4. Sustainability of the projects: The community continues to get benefits of the projects even after project is completed, the community owns them and pools resources to maintain the infrastructure created in the project. The gram panchayat, in collaboration with VDC, invites resource persons from government departments for capacity development of communities. Communities replicate good practices of project interventions with their own funds.

Challenges of Sustainability

The VCCS model may face challenges because capacity development, community awareness, and trust building take three to five years, depending on the context. In addition, convergence with local institutions and government departments is not an easy task, it requires lot of time, energy, and the patience of the VDC and panchayat.

The growing importance of the VDC may not be appreciated by the elected institution such as the gram panchayat, but it should be clear that VDCs are not formed to challenge the elected institution, but as a support group that is aware and technically equipped to make plans and mobilize the support of villagers. Hence the VDC must work in collaboration with the gram panchayat, in fact giving a leading role to the gram panchayat; only then is overall turnaround in the village possible.

The challenges underscore the point that the sustainability of projects is not an easy task; and it may not run on its own unless efforts are made to build a good group of community leaders and in the gram panchayat to take it forward.

Training Curriculum on Sustainability





TRAINING CURRICULUM ON SUSTAINABILITY

For all projects focused on integrated village development, agriculture development, and water management, twelve training sessions are to be organized over a period of twelve months. The timing of the sessions can be adjusted as per the requirements and demands of the projects. Two sessions can be conducted in one month in the lean season of a project if training sessions are not conducted due to the pressure of project deliverables.

Out of the twelve sessions, six sessions are project sessions. These six sessions are based on the themes of integrated village development (IVD) agriculture and water projects, and the project team can design the sessions per the requirements of the project.

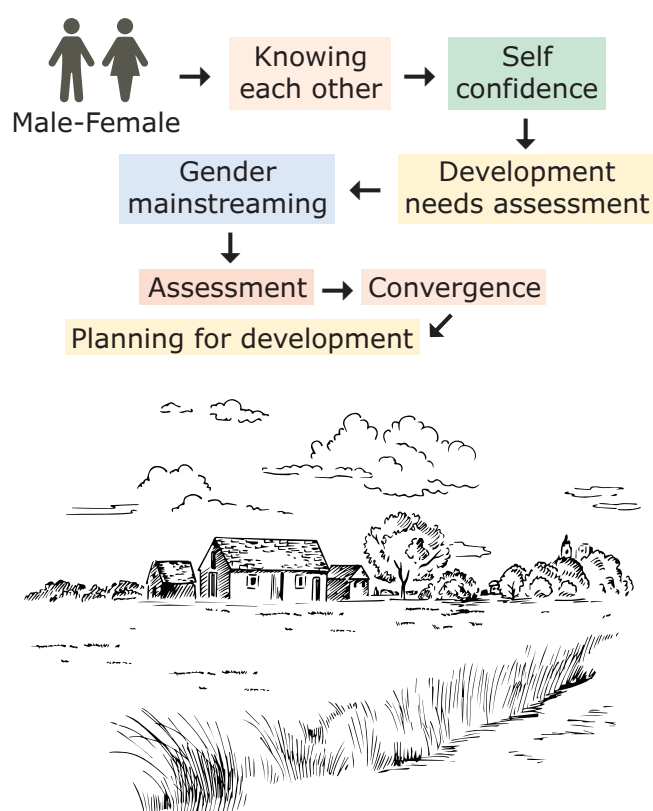
The other 6 sessions have the theme of sustainability with a focus on knowing each other, conducting a needs assessment in the village, mainstreaming women in the gram panchayat and agriculture, participatory assessment of the development initiatives, convergence with government departments and gram panchayats, and development planning in the ward sabha.

The training content for the six sessions of sustainability are designed so that the project teams can conduct training of the Village Development Committee / Farmer Field School / Water Management Committee / Community-based institutions, etc., on their own.

Sessions	Themes of the Sustainability Sessions
1	Knowing each other, and assessment of development needs in the village
2	Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking
3	Gender mainstreaming in gram panchayat, ward sabha, and development initiatives

4	Participatory assessment of the development initiatives
5	Role of gram panchayats and convergence with gram panchayats, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and government departments
6	Development planning in the wards of the gram panchayat

Journey of individual in VDC



Individuals of VDCs move through the sequence process over a one-year period and become active participants in the village development. The villagers who earlier did not know each other and did not have confidence to talk to the gram panchayat and government departments, can now play leading roles in village development.



Session 1: Knowing each other and assessment of development needs in the village





KNOWING EACH OTHER AND ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN THE VILLAGE

Rationale: In rural India, villagers, despite living together for years in the same locality, rarely discuss the development needs of their village or raise the development priorities to the gram panchayat. As a result, their say in the local development is minimal, and their development needs go unaddressed. For initiating the people's participation in local development, the villagers should know each other well and learn the process of assessment of development needs of the village. Knowing the fellow villagers living in different wards, especially those belonging to deprived sections, will help them in knowing their perspectives of development and facilitate better articulation of development needs. Knowing each other, especially villagers belonging to different social groups, is an ongoing process, and there can be many different ways to take up the process for better bonding in the communities.

Objectives: Become acquainted with each other and open regular channels of interaction; identify the development needs, and plan for addressing the needs.

Overview: Importance of knowing each other; build perspective of village development and identify the development needs; focus on advantages of collective articulation and action in the village development process.

Tools: Group work on getting to know each other and focused group discussion on the development needs of the village.

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

Importance of knowing each other

- Rural India is still divided into social groups, and villagers mostly interact within their own social groups. Their interaction with members of other social groups is often limited.
- Women and deprived sections of society hardly know each other or interact with others. Patriarchy and social norms are still constraints to community interaction in the villages.
- Villagers living in different wards may recognize each other but may not know each other by their names. Most have not sat together except for religious or social gatherings and have never discussed the development needs of the village or how to take steps to address the needs.
- The feeling of collectivity or belonging to one village, or being a proud habitant of a village, is lacking in the villagers, hence collective understanding of issues of development and collective action are missing.

- The session will use Tool 1 (below), Getting to know each other through group work to help participants listen, understand, know about, and connect with each other. This interactive exercise facilitates participants to create a bond with each other, so that they can engage and contribute more effectively as a group in the development process in the village.

Tool 1: Group work- Knowing each other

Guidelines

- Welcome the participants. Divide the participants into two groups.
- Invite Group 1 to sit in the outer circle. Group 2 sits in the inner circle.
- Participants of Group 1 (outer circle) and Group 2 (inner circle) face each other.
- One participant of Group 1 and one participant of Group 2 make one pair.
- The game starts with one participant telling the other participant his/ her name and one happy incident in one's life in the last two years.
- After two minutes, the participants of the inner circle move by one position in clockwise direction.
- Participants of the outer circle and the inner circle tell the other about his / her name and one happy incident in one's life in the last two years.
- The inner circle moves on this way till all participants have talked to each other.
- The facilitator/ trainer then asks the participants randomly about one person's name and one happy incident.

- Through this game, the participants know each other and a process of personal bonding has started in the group.

Tool 2: Assessment of development needs (integrated village development, agriculture, and water) of the village

Guidelines

- It is often seen that villagers understand the interventions of the external projects and the benefits they have received from the project, but cannot see the change planned in the project for the whole village and community. Hence they are mostly interested in benefits that they get through the project, and cannot plan for the development of the village.
- In order to develop the perspective of development in the village among the villagers, it is important to engage them in the group exercise of assessing the development needs in the village. Through the group exercise, they will be able to understand the process of village development through the framework of problems, needs, and solutions, which will help them to make a development plan for the village. This will also enable them to take up the needs of the village and make a plan for a solution with the community and gram panchayat.
- The participatory exercise mentioned below will help in identifying development needs of the project, so that villagers can understand the problems and needs, and think collectively about solutions.
- Villagers will be divided into four groups, and each group will be given the task of identifying needs of any of the four themes mentioned below in the info graphics.



- Each group is given the task of identifying the main problems of each theme in the village, mention the needs related to it, and discuss the solutions for addressing the needs.
- For example, Group 1 with the theme of “poor sanitation” can identify the problems related to it. A discussion on poor sanitation in the village can make villagers aware about the causes, scale, and difficulties created by it, and what can be done by the community and gram panchayat for tackling the issue.

Problem Analysis	Needs	Solutions	Feedback
Poor sanitation (cause, scale, difficulties)	Better solid waste management Better liquid waste management	Sanitation drives Awareness of community Drains by GPs	
Shortage of water in agriculture	Awareness about water saving Water saving interventions	Awareness by NGOs Check dams, ponds	
Poor returns on agriculture	Guidance on livelihood options (agriculture, animals, small business)	Vegetable cultivation Small business	
Non-availability of adequate and safe drinking water	Facility for safe drinking water at community or household level	Funds for drinking water pipelines Chlorine tablets from health centers	

- Similarly, other groups can work on the other three themes. The facilitators can guide the groups in identifying the problems of each of the themes.

Presentation by groups

- After they complete the exercise, each group makes the presentation and asks for the feedback of other groups on their presentation.
- The facilitator consolidates the presentation of all groups and helps the villagers understand how the identified development needs can help the participants in making a development plan for the village. Some of the needs are being fulfilled by the project, and some other needs can be taken to the government departments by the gram panchayat.
- In this way, villagers can plan the process of change in the village. The exercise can

also help in planning similar exercises for identifying other development needs of the village.

Facilitator Notes

- Provide equal opportunity for all participants to take part in the group exercise.
- Motivate women and those from deprived sections to speak and put across their opinion.
- Encourage participants to discuss with examples and/or give specific solutions.
- Motivate participants to mobilize other villagers for solving the problems that can be solved at the community level.

Session 2: Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking





ENHANCING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

Rationale: Villagers, especially women and those in deprived sections, often lack exposure to participation in community platforms and public gatherings, hence they find it difficult to articulate their opinions in front of people. They often do not have confidence to talk to a gathering of villagers or government officers or members of the gram panchayat due to gender discrimination and nonavailability of adequate opportunities. The traits of self-confidence and public speaking are very important for villagers and can make them successful, hence they must be encouraged to strive to develop these traits.

Objectives: Encourage villagers to develop traits of self-confidence and public speaking.

Overview: Importance of self-confidence and public speaking for villagers, suggestions for improving self-confidence and public speaking.

Tools: Group work

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

- Self-confidence and public speaking are critical traits of a community leader, especially elected representatives at all levels. A confident person and good communicator can convey their ideas in an effective way. Clear articulation results in better representation of the demands of people to government officers and elected representatives. A confident and convincing community leader can mobilize villagers into collective action to address the issue through community efforts or initiatives of local institutions.
- However, community leaders, especially women and those from deprived sections, lack these skills if they have not been exposed to speaking at public gatherings or community forums. But such skills can be developed with information and practice.
- It is important to understand the meaning of self-confidence, ways to develop it, and understanding the relationship between self-confidence and public speaking. "Self-confidence is belief in one's skills and abilities. It means one trusts oneself, one knows about their strengths and weaknesses and has a positive view of oneself." (University of South Florida Student affairs, counseling center).
- Self-confidence enables a person to speak out clearly in interactions. It builds self-belief in one's ability to get things done. A self-confident person can deal with difficult people and situations in an effective way. It may also help in experimenting with new ideas and new ways of doing things.
- Self-confidence can be developed in a gradual way through sustained effort, guidance, and training. Below are three steps to build confidence:



- ✓ Develop a positive attitude: we hear about the importance of positive attitude from sports figures and leaders. They often say that being positive keeps them going in spite of heavy odds or failures. One should not allow negative thoughts to come to mind; constantly remind oneself that such thoughts should be driven away. At the same time, it is important to keep in touch with groups who give positive feedback and provide motivation to keep going.
- ✓ Recognizing one's weaknesses: it is important to recognize one's weakness and be able to discuss them with close friends. Develop a plan to work on weaknesses one by one over a period of time.
- ✓ Set pragmatic goals: develop realistic and pragmatic goals, and achievement of these goals should be celebrated in close groups. Persons who achieve these goals should be congratulated and motivated to continue their efforts. At the same time, one should develop the habit of helping others, which will not only build their confidence but also create a support base for them.
- Public speaking and self-confidence are directly related to each other. A person who is self-confident can express him/ herself freely without fear. A community leader

who can speak well can galvanize people to tackle the issues of the village.

- Not everyone has the gift of public speaking, however it is a skill which can be developed with effort and practice. People can develop the following suggestions to develop this skill:

- ✓ Speak from the heart: speak about emotions you have on a particular topic, relate day-to-day experiences. Community leaders should not preach like religious gurus, use big slogans, or ask for big pledges of commitment from people. One should be excited to share one's experience. Speaking in a dull tone may not attract people.
- ✓ Plan to overcome fear of public speaking: fear is natural when one is doing something for the first time. When one is learning to drive, one has fears; when one is having an examination, one has fears. Fear is quite normal. Fear of public speaking can be reduced by practice, practice, and practice. One can practice in front of relatives or friends and ask for feedback on content, speed of speaking, emotional appeal, and missed points.
- ✓ Prepare for public speaking: one should not go unprepared when she/he has to make a speech. Compile details of information about the subject of a speech. No need to learn it by heart or rote, because if they forget the points, then she/he is likely to get nervous and become speechless for a while. Better to remember the points and relate them to day-to-day experiences.



Tool 1: Exercise on Developing Self-Confidence, Time: 45 minutes

Guidelines

All participants are divided into pairs. Each participant should identify two fears or negative thoughts that come to their minds regularly (Box 1). Write it down on the piece of paper (chit). Share these with their partner. Also share their frightful experiences with it, and since the time they have been experiencing it. Facilitator then brings mud pot and lights up newspaper in the mud pot. Each participant comes and throws their chits in the fire, they also promise that they will not give time to fears or negative thoughts in their lives again. Facilitator debriefs participants that they should always try to move away from negative thoughts and fears, and replace them about positive thoughts.

Box 1

Identifying fears/negative thoughts within oneself

- Stage fear
- Fear of speaking in front of educated persons
- Losing patience quickly
- Shouting at other villagers



Burning of fears



Tool 2: Exercise on Public Speaking, Time: 45 minutes

Guidelines

The facilitator in consultation with participants chooses five topics on development action by community leader from their village or nearby village (Box 2). Leader writes these on the white board or chart paper. Participants are divided into pairs. The group exercise starts when one pair is asked to speak for two minutes on any topic written on chart paper. First a person from the pair speaks and their partner can add some point on the topic. Once they finish speaking, the group claps, appreciating their confidence. The exercise goes on till everyone has spoken on the topics identified.

Box 2

Topics of public speaking

- Education of girl children
- Water situation in the village
- Good sanitation practices in the village
- Alcoholism in men
- Your dream village

Success story

Kamini Devi, Muzaffarpur district, Bihar shares that she had never attended any gram sabha or public meeting in her life, and never had the confidence to speak in front of three or four people. Kamini says, “After attending the training program of Sehgal Foundation, I started to participate in the gram sabha meetings and had confidence to raise some issues related to women in the meeting. I feel empowered having gained knowledge about many things through trainings.”

Facilitator Notes

The facilitator can add more topics or even ask participants to choose the topics in Tool 2. The exercise can be repeated every month if participants have time. Gradually some participants will start developing confidence in public speaking, then they can be asked to give speeches on problems of villages, how to solve them, and their vision for developing their village.

Session 3: Gender mainstreaming in gram panchayat and development initiatives





GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN GRAM PANCHAYAT AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Rationale: Gender inequality is the main issue that prevents the participation of men, women, and gender-diverse people in different aspects of village life. Women and gender-diverse people find it difficult to participate in village-level institutions such as gram panchayat, gram sabha, and development initiatives undertaken by the gram panchayat and NGOs. They often lack capacity as they have not had the opportunity for education, training, and exposure. Even when they have capacity, they are not given the space due to cultural and social norms. To address gender inequality in the village, gender mainstreaming needs to be discussed within the local institutions and development initiatives in the village.

Objectives: Identify gender inequality issues in the village, discuss and plan how these can be addressed through gender mainstreaming.

Overview: Gender, gender inequality, gender inequality in the villages, gender mainstreaming, planning change through gender mainstreaming.

Tools: Focused group discussion on exercises on gender mainstreaming.

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

Gender Mainstreaming

- Gender is defined as characteristics of women and men, girls and boys, that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy in a particular society. It also includes relationships of men and women with each other.
- Gender roles constructed by society include: women do household work, men go outside to work, sons take care of parents, daughters are to be married and need not be educated. Men are providers and protectors, women are caregivers and household caretakers; men are strong and courageous, women are gentle and soft.
- These roles have been developed in the societies, and they result in treating men and women as unequal. It affects women's education, opportunities to move out and earn, and other enjoyments of life.
- These roles are important in shaping relationships between men and women. If women do not cook food, men get angry; men cannot appear to be weak or cry as wives feel ashamed that they have weak husband. All these affects marital relationships.
- Gender norms in a society can be challenged through gender mainstreaming in a number of local institutions and development initiatives in the village.
- Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making men's, women's and gender diverse

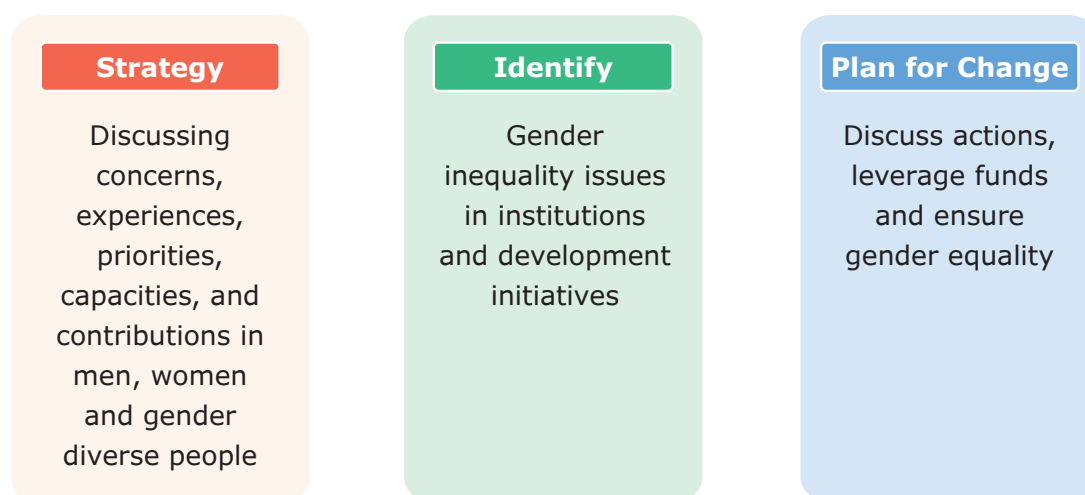
people's concerns, experiences, priorities, capacities, and contributions an integral part of programs and policies.

- In the context of a village, it means men, women, and gender-diverse people get an equal opportunity to be part of development initiatives, e.g. construction of roads and drains, and institutions such as gram panchayat, gram sabha, and the school management committee. They get the opportunity to participate in the functioning of institutions, livelihood activities, development initiatives, and decision-making.
- Communities can be enabled to identify gender equality issues in the gram panchayat, and discuss and think

about explicit actions to address these systematically.

- This brings attention and funds to critical issues of gender equality, women's development, and empowerment, and can result in the gram panchayat giving more funds to development priorities, e.g. education, sanitation, and drinking water, as identified by women. The gram panchayat can be influenced to call a meeting at time which suits women and provides opportunities for them to participate.
- The goal is to make gender mainstreaming integral part of all institutions and development initiatives at the gram panchayat level, so that men, women, and gender-diverse people get equal benefits.

Figure 1: Gender Mainstreaming



Tool 1: Check gender mainstreaming in representing demands to a gram panchayat

Guidelines

- The facilitator keeps white and yellow colored stars on the mat before the participants. The white stars represent men, and yellow stars represent women.
- The facilitator explains the triangle with four layers to the participants. Through the triangle and placement of stars in the four layers, the level of representation of villagers to the gram panchayat can be estimated.
- Layer 1 shows if the males and females have never taken their demands or villager's demands, individually or collectively, to the

gram panchayat. If males or females have not taken their demands to gram panchayat, they paste their star on this layer.

- Layer 2 shows if the males and females have taken their demands or villager's demands to the gram panchayat individually or collectively in one to three months. If males or females have taken a demand to the gram panchayat, they paste their star on this layer.
- Layer 3 shows if the males and females have taken their demands or villager's demands to the gram panchayat individually or collectively in four to six months. If males

or females have taken a demand to the gram panchayat, they paste their star on this layer.

- Layer 4 shows if the males and females have taken their demands or villager's demand to the gram panchayat individually or collectively in 7 to 12 months. If males or females have taken a demand to the gram panchayat, they paste their star on this layer.
- The facilitator then counts the number of white stars and yellow stars in each layer and writes the total number on each layer.



Tool 1: Checking gender mainstreaming in representing demands to gram panchayat

Key questions after group exercise

The facilitator then discusses the following questions with the participants.

- Why is number of yellow stars (females) less in each layer?
- Why are there no stars in any one layer?
- Why are number of white stars (males) more on some layers?
- What can be done to increase the number of stars in all the layers?

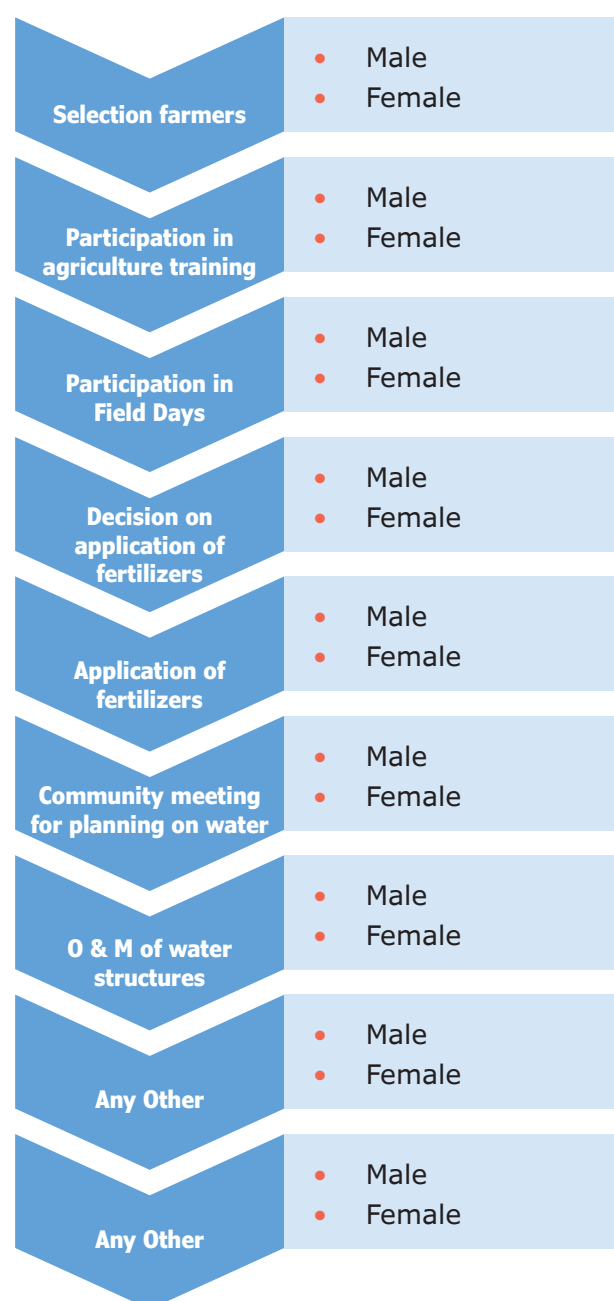
- What prevents women and men from representing their demands to the gram panchayat?
- Write four action points in consultation with the participants to increase representation of demands by women to the gram panchayat.

Tool 2: Check gender mainstreaming in agriculture (Package of practices in agriculture, vegetable cultivation, any other) and water activities

Guidelines

- The facilitator explains to participants that they are going to check the participation of men and women in different project interventions of agriculture and water. Here we have selected the package of practice's intervention for the group exercise.
- In the package of practice's intervention, seven activities have been chosen:
 - ✓ Selection of farmers
 - ✓ Participation in agriculture training
 - ✓ Participation in field days
 - ✓ Decision on which fertilizers to apply on crops
 - ✓ Application of fertilizers on crops
 - ✓ Community meeting for planning water interventions (ponds, drinking water)
 - ✓ Taking decisions of operations and maintenance of water structures or drinking water pipelines
- All these activities are written on a chart paper and placed in the middle of the training hall, on a table, or on the ground.

- Two rows (one for male and second for female) are drawn in front of each activity.
- Each participant is given a sketch pen, and they should mark a tick in front of each activity if they participate in the activity.
- Male participants should mark in front of the male row.
- Females participants should mark in front of the female row.
- Facilitator then counts number of ticks in the rows and writes it down.



Key questions after group exercise

The facilitator discusses the following questions with the participants.

- Why is the number of ticks in female row of some activities less?
- Why is the number of ticks in male row of some activities more?
- What prevents participation of women in the project activities?
- What can be done to increase women's participation in some activities?
- What are the ways males can support women to participate more in project activities?
- Write four action points in consultation with the participants to increase participation of women in project activities?

Facilitator's notes

- The main factors causing gender inequality in the gram panchayat could be social/cultural norms, lack of opportunities for women to participate in education, training, and employment.
- The gender inequality issues can be addressed by systematically designing action points for each activity in consultation with men and women.
- A slow process of change can start in each activity, such as participation in gram sabha, gram panchayat, and project activities with support from male family members.
- Adequate field-level training should be organized for women so that they can start moving toward participation and decision-making in different activities.
- Gender mainstreaming is planning action for change, it will not happen on its own, the process needs to be planned, guided, and led by motivated stakeholders.



Session 4: Participatory Assessment of the Development Initiatives





PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Rationale: Lack of awareness of the local communities, especially women community members about project / development interventions in the village and provisions of key government programs often leads to poor quality project implementation such as assets (construction of ponds and laying of pipes for drinking water) and ineffective public service delivery. Engaging with community leaders regularly to learn about objectives and operations of the projects and rights of the communities has the potential to encourage them to take up leadership roles in development of village and drive a better delivery of public services. The session is designed to establish the importance of being aware about the objectives and operations of the projects, main provisions of government programs, current status, and existing gaps, so that community leaders are in the forefront of development.

Objectives: Encourage community leaders to participate in assessment of development initiatives and key government programs.

Overview: Importance of local participation in assessment of development initiatives and key government programs.

Tools: Participatory Assessment of Development Initiatives (PAD).

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

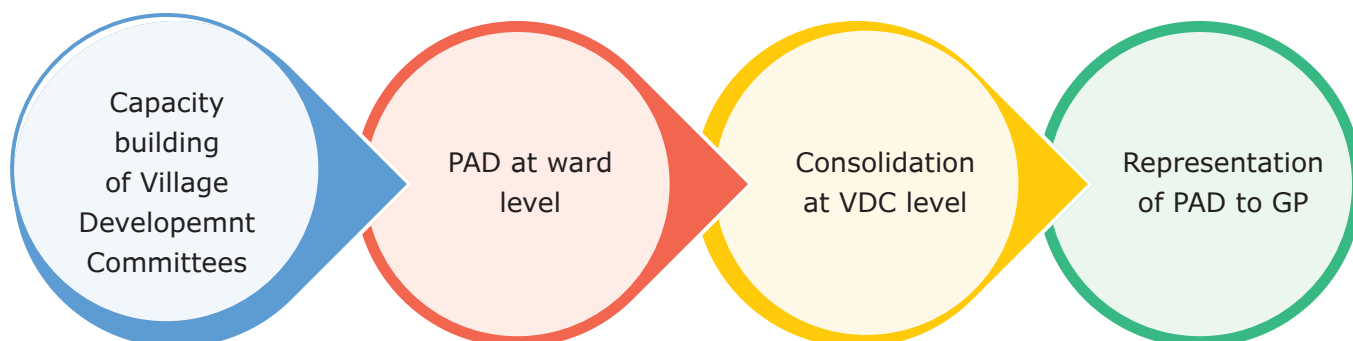
- Essential to the well-being of the rural poor are the effective implementation of development interventions and the delivery of basic services such as health, education, water, sanitation, and various social security measures. Accessible, quality services contribute to holistic village development and help to restore quality of life for the villagers. However, last-mile delivery of development interventions such as ponds, drinking water, education, and social security benefits, are often not satisfactory, thus depriving the communities of the benefits of development.
- Apart from systemic issues like corruption or poor infrastructure, a number of these services tend to fail due to lack of accountability and non-responsiveness of government functionaries. This in turn is intensified due to poor awareness about and monitoring of these services by the local communities who are the actual end users.
- Once the local community becomes conscious and initiates regular monitoring of the implementation of development interventions and key government programs in their villages, in many instances the government representatives responsible for functioning of these services start delivering better.

- Experiences from the grassroots have also revealed that local means of engaging community leaders to learn about their role in monitoring and supporting the development interventions and provision of government programs can go a long way in helping them become well-informed citizens who will eventually take on leadership roles to improve their lives and their communities.
- By understanding their role in village development and better access to government programs, these community leaders can lead the good-quality asset creation in the villages and better delivery of government programs.
- For assessing development initiatives in the village, the tool, Participatory Assessment of Development (PAD) Initiatives, is used, so that community leaders can do the exercise on their own to find out about the changes brought about in the village.
- **The PAD tool can also be used to assess the sustainability of project interventions after the project is over.** Community leaders can conduct PAD on project interventions on an annual basis to find out the benefits of the project interventions, adoption of package of practices, and functioning of assets (water harvesting structures, check dams, drinking water RO system).
- The project teams can modify the tool 1 as per required context to assess sustainability of the project interventions. The tool should not be administered by an external agency; it should be carried out with community leaders, using participatory tools.

Using Participatory Assessment of Development Initiatives (PAD) in monitoring of village development

- Participatory Assessment of Development Initiatives (PAD) is a village development committee-level, interaction-based tool that helps to generate awareness of development interventions, various entitlements, and local-self-governance systems. It is similar to social audit exercises mandated in various government programs, but the focus is on group discussion not on usage of various tools of social accountability. The effort is to highlight the issues and bottlenecks to the gram panchayat, and follow up with it so that corrective action can be taken. In cases of project interventions implemented by external organizations or NGOs, the effort is to give feedback to the organizations so they can plan corrective measures with the community.
- PAD also provides a platform for external organizations / NGOs to track the process of change due to development interventions and better access to government programs. The communities can share feedback on how they have benefited from development interventions and better access to government programs. The facilitator of the external organization can document the benefits and present holistic development progress in the village. It will help the communities and community leaders to understand the outcomes / changes, learn the process of planning development, and strive for similar development interventions in the village.
- The exercise helps to identify ward-wise successes as well as gaps in implementation of key government programs. Major steps of PAD are mentioned below:

Steps of PAD:



1. Capacity building of the village development committee for facilitating the process of PAD: The Village Development Committee should facilitate the PAD exercise after being trained on the process of conducting PAD. The VDCs are provided training on the PAD tools by the external agency.
2. Ward-wise meetings for PAD: The VDC is divided into four groups, and each group is given the task of conducting PAD (Tool 1) in different wards of the gram panchayat. The VDC members facilitate the discussion and note down the responses of the villagers. These responses form the database on the community's access to benefits of government schemes and development initiatives in the village.
3. Consolidation of PAD at VDC level: Once PAD is completed in the selected wards, consolidation of the data generated and its presentation are done at a meeting at the VDC level. Representatives from the selected wards, especially ward members, may attend this meeting, which is facilitated by the VDC members. This data helps the VDC and ward members understand the current status of government schemes and development initiatives in the village.
4. Presentation of PAD at gram panchayat level: The consolidated PAD data is presented before gram panchayat by the VDC members. The presentation of the PAD data gives an opportunity for the panchayat, VDCs and communities to come together on a common platform to address the development gaps that have been identified in the PAD.

Tool 1: Participatory Assessment of Development Initiatives

Development Interventions	Awareness level (low/ middle/ high)	Yield Increase (5% / 10%/ greater than 10%)	Adoption of POP (0% / 10% / 25%) of farmers)	Total # farmers who benefited, approx income increase per family
1. Distribution of package of practices in selected crops				
POP Wheat				
POP Mustard				
Vegetable cultivation – good practices				

2. ICDS (Aanganwadi centers)	#beneficiaries who get it	#beneficiaries who do not get	Regularity of functioning (low/middle /high)	Total number of children and women who benefitted
Supplementary food for children				
Supplementary food for pregnant women				
Immunization of children				
Preschool education				
Any other				
3. Goatery	Number of goats distributed	Mortality rate (low / middle / high)	Likely income increase per family after 2 years	Total number of families who benefitted
Ward No				
Ward No				
4. Pensions	How many people get in the village	How many eligible do not get it	Wards where eligible non pensioners live	Total number of villagers who get pension
Old age				
Widow				
Disabled				
5. Drinking water supply to the households (govt scheme)	Have pipelines been laid, water tank installed (Yes/No)	Has water supply started(Yes/ No)	Number of households which are getting regular water supply (Yes/No)	Outcome of safe drinking water on health, saving on medical treatment per family per year(Yes/No)

**The project teams can add more such tables on their own per their requirements. This tool can also be used to assess sustainability of project interventions with VDCs. You can find answers to questions whether project interventions are still giving benefits to community after project is over.*

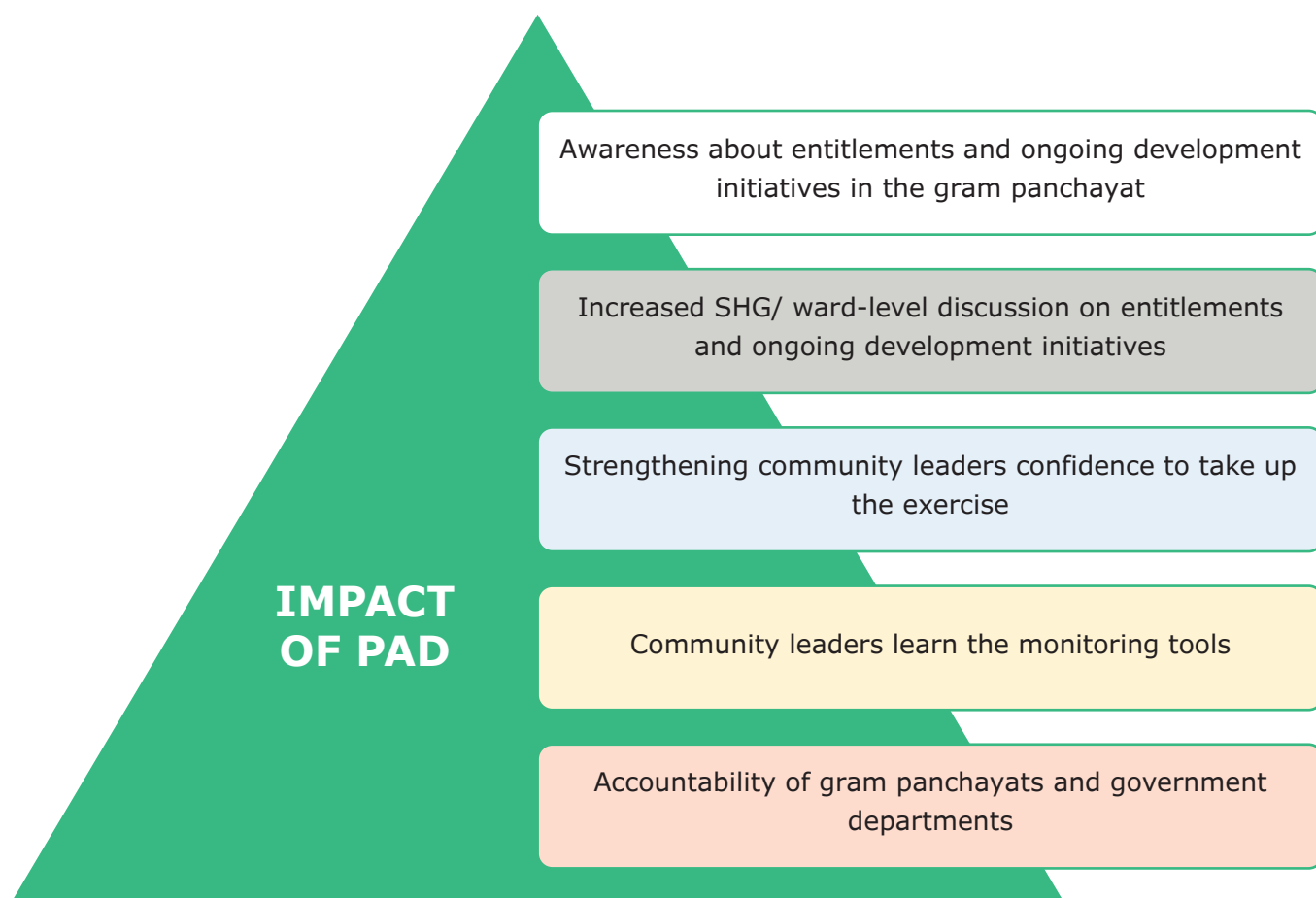
Facilitator Notes

- The VDC members now know the status of functioning of government schemes and development initiatives in the villages.
- The facilitator can guide them to carry out similar exercise every six months and update gram panchayat/ external agency on it. It will build pressure on gram panchayat/ external agency to take corrective action.
- It is important to engage communities in the ward-level meeting, so that communities understand the issues and they also act as pressure group on gram panchayat.
- Special meetings can be conducted for women and people from deprived sections in ward-level meetings as they are not given opportunity to speak in the common meetings.

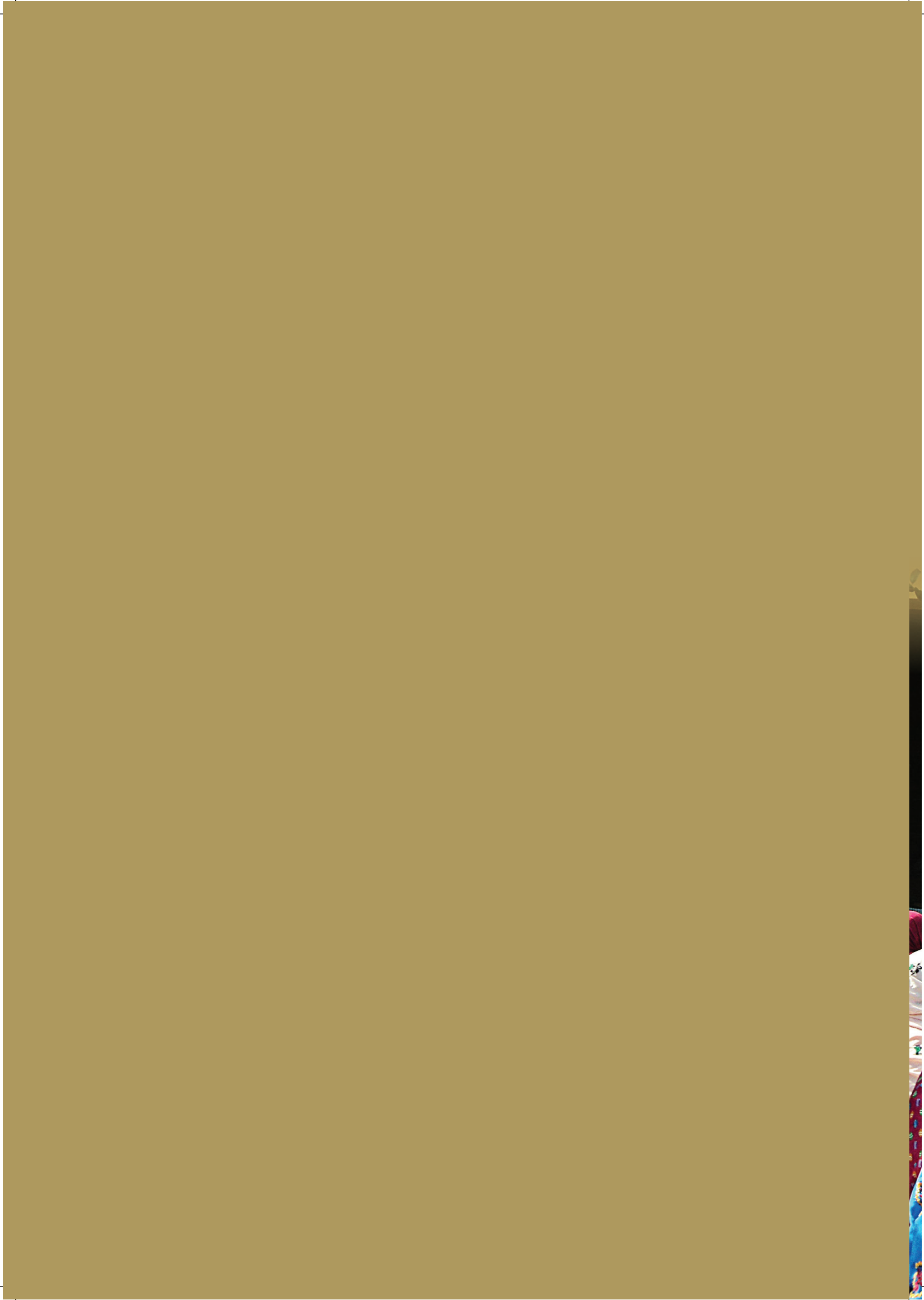
- Motivate women groups / self-help groups to conduct participatory assessment of some households where they live and share the findings with VDC. VDC can include these findings in their consolidation exercise, wherever possible, which will eliminate bias of approach, if any.

Impact of PAD

PAD creates an enabling environment for ward-level discussion about existing key government programs and development initiatives in the gram panchayat, and in the process generates awareness about the entitlements and ongoing development initiatives among the communities. In general, the process brings about the following immediate impacts:



Note: PAD tools has been adapted from a PAE tool (Participatory Assessment of Entitlements developed by Kudumbashree, NRO of MORD, GOI)



Session 5: The Role of Gram Panchayats and Convergence with Gram Panchayats, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and Government Departments





THE ROLE OF GRAM PANCHAYATS AND CONVERGENCE WITH GRAM PANCHAYATS, KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRAS AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Rationale: The village development committee is an important body for spearheading development activities in the village, which works in collaboration with gram panchayat. The gram panchayat, being the elected body, makes decisions for the development of the whole panchayat, and it can approach government departments to replicate the activities completed in the project. The VDC and gram panchayat can also approach Krishi Vigyan Kendra and government departments to provide resource persons for training farmers and villagers and provide updates on government schemes. The convergence with these institutions results in villagers getting better access to information and benefits from government departments. KVK and government departments also benefit, as their programs will have better outreach.

Objectives: Encourage village development committee members to work in collaboration with gram panchayat, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, and government departments in order to know about the most current information and have better access to benefits such as crop demonstrations and other innovations in agriculture.

Overview: The importance of convergence with gram panchayat, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, and government departments, and how to accomplish it.

Tools: Case study discussion and action planning.

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

1. It is important to make VDC members understand the rationale of convergence with gram panchayat and key local institutions such as Krishi Vigyan Kendra and government departments.
2. The VDC members should regularly update the gram panchayat about the project and invite them to see the project sites.
3. VDCs should organize events on special days in collaboration with the gram panchayat, and honor the sarpanch for supporting the project work.
4. VDCs and the gram panchayat should invite KVK and key government departments to events on special days, asking for updates on department schemes and to help villagers in filing online applications.
5. Honour key community leaders who have done very well in the project and prize distribution by the sarpanch and government officers.

6. Gather progressive farmers in gram panchayat bhawan and organize some training programs for farmers by scientists of KVKs.
7. Inform KVKs and agriculture departments that progressive farmers are willing to test crop demonstrations and use of farm mechanization and facilitating demonstrations to the farmers.

Case Study: Engaging with agriculture extension center (KVK), Muzaffarpur, Bihar

In the project villages of an agriculture project in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, about 150 farmers were given package of practices (POP) in paddy, wheat, and maize, and they were regularly trained how to use the POP. The Village Development Committee was formed in the village for spreading the message of good farming practices among other villagers and coordinating with agriculture extension departments of government, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), and the gram panchayat. The VDC, with project team, established linkages with KVK, Saraiya, to facilitate the training of farmers in the gram panchayat and provide some demonstrations as per their targets. In the year 2019–20, fifty-three demonstrations on mustard, lentil, potato, and wheat were distributed to farmers by KVK. They have also distributed two hand maize sheller machines designed by the Agriculture Engineering Department, Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agriculture University, Samastipur. The VDC invites scientists of KVK regularly to their gram panchayat for training farmers in the post-project period and for regular information

updates that help the farmers in increasing their crop productivity.

Ask one farmer of the VDC to read it aloud, then ask the group to do action planning for convergence in their village.

Action planning by VDCs for convergence meeting: Group work

1. Divide the VDC into two groups
2. Ask each group to select an important agency with which they want to conduct the convergence meeting and why?
3. Choose a special day for conducting the meeting.
4. Choose the villagers who will be called for the meeting and who will make arrangements for the meeting?
5. Discuss what expected benefits you expect from the convergence meeting.

Facilitator notes

- Guide VDC members to select agencies that can fulfill the development / public services needs of the village.
- Give them a list of special days such as World Water Day, Soil Health Day, Good Governance Day, Panchayat Day, Save Girl Child, etc.
- Ask participants to give equal representation to women and deprived sections while inviting them for meetings.

Session 6: Development Planning in the Wards of the Gram Panchayat





DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE WARDS OF THE GRAM PANCHAYAT

Rationale: The members of the Village Development Committee, after the five sessions of training, know about the development interventions and the necessity to engage more with the community. They would also have realized that they need to lead in solving the development issues they face. The entry point of their engagement with the community can be ward-level meeting where they can mobilize and motivate villagers to share the problems related to development and access to public services they need. The VDC can get support of villagers through these meetings in taking up demands with the gram panchayat and the government department. In the process, the process also motivates the villagers who are not part of VDC to take the lead in taking up development issues in the gram panchayat.

Objectives: Encourage Village Development Committee members to engage other villagers of the wards in the development planning of the gram panchayat.

Overview: Steps for development planning in the ward are described in brief, which will enable villagers to carry out the exercise on their own.

Tools: Focussed group discussion

Time: 120 minutes

Overview

Bottom-up planning is a powerful tool for articulating the needs of poor women and farmers in the gram panchayat in an effective way. Their inclusion in village development and the decisions related to it ensures that all sections of the society receive the benefits of development. Through this process, local knowledge about the development plan and interventions can also be tapped. Gram sabha is the best forum to do this, but because difficulties involved in organizing the meeting, and lack of opportunities for women and poor to participate in it, small meetings at the ward level can be a good pathway for engaging people in local development.

Convening a ward-level meeting or ward sabha is always easy, and the villagers living in the

ward can be informed by word of mouth. In such meetings, the poor and women have space to participate and have their say in identifying problems they face in their lives, and what they expect government to do.

Advantages

- A plan is made by the actual beneficiaries, which is more responsive to local needs and conditions.
- This enhances the potential for community their participation in their own development

Steps for development planning in ward

- 1. Environment building:** The members of Village Development Committee interact

with ward members and some households in their ward, they mobilize them to discuss problems and needs of the wards and their expectations of the gram panchayat. With ward members, the VDC members fix the time and date of a meeting and ask the water operator / panchayat functionaries / chaukidar to inform the households. A WhatsApp group is also formed of the ward, where the members are informed of the meeting. A youth leader can be given responsibility for running the group and keeping the members updated.

2. Problem analysis and need

identification: For identifying the needs, the problems need to be discussed in the community. They need to find out causes of the problems, agencies / those responsible for the problems, and then identify the needs for resolving the problems. The discussion on the problems will make community aware of the causes and consequences of the problems, which will trigger them to take action. For example, a ward has a problem of household water collection in the ward: villagers in problem analysis identify the households from which water is flowing out in the street, condition of drains, are the drains clogged, consequences of water stagnation such as mosquitoes, flies causing diseases in the families living in the street, difficulties for families to walk in the street, and expenses of the diseases. The problem analysis of wastewater helps them to understand the issue, consequences, and corrective actions to resolve the issue. It should be ensured that women and members of deprived sections are given space to speak in the discussion.

3. Prioritization of needs:

Once needs of the ward are identified in the ward, the community needs to prioritize the needs in order of importance. The needs that require action immediately should be on the top of the list. The needs once identified should be

taken up for correction action at the ward and gram panchayat level. Repeated raising of needs at gram panchayat and gram sabha pressures the election representative in the gram panchayat for action.

Tool 1: Focused group discussion for need identification

Once villagers gather for the ward sabha, all are given space to sit. It should be ensured that all participants should either sit on the floor or in chairs. Some members sitting on chairs and some sitting on floors is strictly not acceptable. (Normally women and poor are given space to sit on the floor, but these practices should be avoided.)

1. Problem analysis and need

identification: The ward member explains the agenda of the meeting and asks participants about the problems related to development and access to public services faced by them. A youth writes the problems on the flip charts. The problems that can be solved by community at ward level are written on CHART 1, problems that can be solved by gram panchayat are written on CHART 2 and problems that can be solved by district / state / national government are written on CHART 3. Women and members of deprived sections should be motivated to speak in the discussion.

CHART 1: COMMUNITY LEVEL PROBLEMS



CHART 2: GRAM PANCHAYAT LEVEL PROBLEMS



CHART 3: DISTRICT / STATE LEVEL PROBLEMS



- 2. Prioritize needs:** Once the problems are identified, the ward member reads these problems aloud so that every participant becomes aware of the problems being faced by villagers in the ward. Then the villagers are asked to raise the hand for the most important problem in Chart 1. In this way, they identify the three most-important problems of Chart 1. The villagers are asked to describe the needs that will address the problem. For example, if the villagers have identified a problem of collection of wastewater in the ward, the need will be to manage wastewater in the ward.

This process is followed for identifying three most-important needs of Chart 2 and Chart 3. The VDC member or youth volunteer marks the important needs as identified by the villagers on Chart 1, Chart 2, and Chart 3.

CHART 1: COMMUNITY LEVEL NEED PRIORITIZATION



CHART 2: GRAM PANCHAYAT LEVEL NEED PRIORITIZATION



CHART 3: DISTRICT / STATE LEVEL NEED PRIORITIZATION



In the end, participants are asked to plan action points for the needs identified by them. The youth volunteer / VDC member writes the action points and encourages participants to fix the timeframe for it as well. This discussion is done for all the three charts.

The problems identified in Chart 2 and Chart 3 are forwarded to the gram panchayat on a written application for further action.

Facilitator Notes

1. The crowd management in the ward-level meeting can be an issue if more than forty villagers gather in the meeting. VDC members will then need to divide the meeting into two groups, and different VDC members lead the exercise in different groups. That will help all sections to give their opinion in the meeting. The discussions in each of the groups can be consolidated later in the VDC meeting.
2. VDC members can start the discussion by giving examples of any problems in the wards, thus providing clues to the villagers to think about problems and related needs in the ward.
3. Raising of hands in need prioritization should be handled carefully as needs identified by some villagers may not be voted by the majority. VDC members should carefully explain to such villagers that their needs are important and will be taken up in the upcoming meetings.



Annexure: Village Development Committee Curriculum





VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (VDC)

TRAINING CURRICULUM

INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Objective: to enable the members of village development committee to support and lead village development in their villages

Training Session	Theme	Core / Optional Theme	Remarks
1 (April)	Knowing each other and assessment of development needs in the village	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
2 (May)	Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
3 (June)	Village Development Committee membership, role and responsibilities	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
4 (July)	Soil health, nutrient management, and good cropping practices in kharif, and animal health management	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
5 (Aug)	Gender mainstreaming in gram panchayat, and development initiatives	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
6 (Sep)	Awareness of 4–5 government programs and online filing of applications through common service center	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
7 (Oct)	Soil health, nutrient management, and good cropping practices in rabi, and animal health management	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
8 (Nov)	Behavioral change on sanitation and hygiene, and sanitation drives	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
9 (Dec)	Participatory assessment of development interventions	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
10 (Jan)	Role of gram panchayats and convergence with gram panchayats, Krishi Viygan Kendras, and government departments	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
11 (Feb)	Awareness of 4–5 government programs and online filing of applications through common service center, followed by sanitation drives	Project interventions	Project team to decide the theme
12 (Mar)	Development planning in the wards of gram panchayat	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (VDC)

TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

Objective: to enable the members of village development committee to support and lead village development in their villages

Training Session	Theme	Core / Optional Theme	Tools
1 (April)	Knowing each other and assessment of development needs in the village	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
2 (May)	Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
3 (June)	Soil health, nutrient management, and good cropping practices in kharif	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
4 (July)	Farm mechanization in kharif, and use of micro-irrigation system	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
5 (Aug)	Gender mainstreaming in gram panchayat, and development initiatives	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed
6 (Sep)	Animal health and nutrient management (goatery, cows, buffaloes)	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
7 (Oct)	Soil health, nutrient management, and, POP good cropping practices in Rabi	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
8 (Nov)	Farm mechanization in rabi, and use of micro-irrigation system	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
9 (Dec)	Participatory assessment of development interventions	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
10 (Jan)	Key government programs on agriculture and allied activities and online filing of applications	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
11 (Feb)	Role of gram panchayats and convergence with gram panchayats, Krishi Viygan Kendras, and government departments	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
12 (Mar)	Development planning in the wards of gram panchayat	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (VDC)

TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR WATER PROJECTS

Objective: to enable the members of village development committee to support and lead water interventions their villages

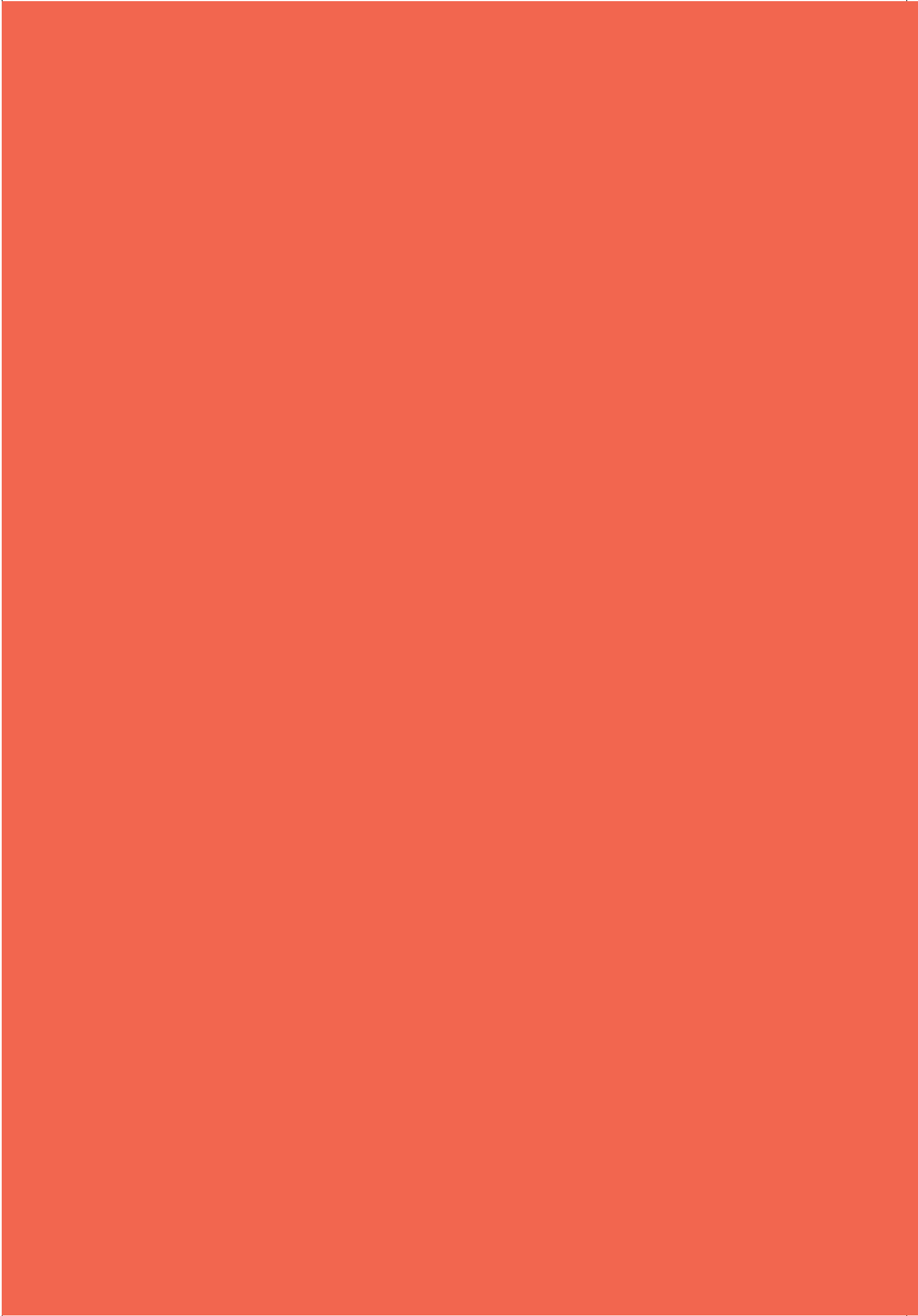
Training Session	Theme	Core / Optional Theme	Tools
1 (April)	Knowing each other, and assessment of development needs in the village	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
2 (May)	Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
3 (June)	Role of Water Management committees / Tank User Groups (about project interventions and indigenous practices of water conservation, community support, planning, community contribution, expected benefits, support in running the project and getting NOCs)	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
4 (July)	Understanding the designs of civil structure: check dams, tanks, ponds, recharge wells, roof water harvesting structures, soak pit/well, drinking water storage tanks; and monitoring the construction	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
5 (Aug)	Gender mainstreaming in gram panchayat, and development initiatives	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
6 (Sep)	Water budgeting in the village, explaining the concept	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
7 (Oct)	Water budgeting in the village, promoting rational use of water	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.
8 (Nov)	Participatory assessment of development interventions	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
9 (Dec)	Operational and maintenance of the civil structures	Project interventions	Project team decides the theme.
10 (Jan)	Role of gram panchayats and convergence with gram panchayats and government departments	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
11 (Feb)	Development planning in the wards of gram panchayat	Sustainability interventions	Theme cannot be changed.
12 (Mar)	Organizing water-saving campaign on World Water Day (sharing findings of water budget in small meeting with villagers followed by rallies by children around the village)	Project interventions	Project team decides theme.

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