Role of Community Developer in Improving Lives with Sustainability

Dr. Sreeni K R

ABSTRACT

Community development entails inclusive change-making actions that include an appraisal of the social, economic, and political conditions of the communities. It's based on several tenets, such as participation, dialogue, problem-solving, identifying the best course of action within society, and capacity building for empowerment and consciousness raising. The effect of several projects and programs from the national and state governments, panchayats, and NGO is changing Indian villages. The Agricultural areas, which is the main focus of development, are undergoing significant changes as a result of government initiatives like land reform, electrification, irrigation, public distribution system, rural infrastructure, commercialization and monetization of various sectors of economic life, and unification of the nation through the development of communication means. Eighteen percent of the GDP is attributable to agriculture and allied sectors, while Fourty six percent of Indians are directly employed in the agriculture sector.

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Community development entails inclusive change-making actions that include an appraisal of the social, economic, and political conditions of the communities. It's based on several tenets, such as participation, dialogue, problem-solving, identifying the best course of action within society, and capacity building for empowerment and consciousness raising. The effect of several projects and programs from the national and state governments, panchayats, and NGO is changing Indian villages. The Agricultural areas, which is the main focus of development, are undergoing significant changes as a result of government initiatives like land reform, electrification, irrigation, public distribution system, rural infrastructure, commercialization and monetization of various sectors of economic life, and unification of the nation through the development of communication means. Eighteen percent of the GDP is attributable to agriculture and allied sectors, while Fourty six percent of Indians are directly employed in the agriculture sector. India won't advance until its villages are improved. For Indian communities to grow, social or community workers must take a significant part in that process. Based on my own experience working on numerous rural development projects in Indian villages, the development approaches are to include communities in helping to promote and provide local programs.

Figure 1: Discussing numerous rural development initiatives, including local communities 'contributions to the promotion and provision of local programs

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since community work aims to remove deeply ingrained injustices and disadvantages, it is not a process that happens quickly. It is understood that depending on the community engaged, it takes varying lengths of time to achieve tangible

results. Although different organizations and groups employ different definitions of community development/community work, they typically share a few key components. In order to create long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, connections, discourse, decision-making, or execution, community engagement aims to better involve the community. Community relationships and senses of ownership are important components of sustainable development. In its turn, sustainable development depends on the presence of a capable and progressive people, whose determined involvement in social life requires community empowerment (Gaye and Diallo 1997). In addition, the vagueness associated with the concepts of community empowerment and sustainability has contributed to a poor understanding of the relationship between community participation, community capacity building, community empowerment, and sustainability (Fetterman 2007). It took five years to transform a tribal hamlet- Sadivayal-Coimbatore, into an Organic Certified Village during my community involvement program at Amrita SeRVe. To be successful, it encompassed strategies and processes that are sensitive to the community-context where food and nutrition security are a primary concern at Sadivayal Village.

Figure 2: Beginning of Work and Transformation of Land

II.   METHODOLOGY

To better the lives of communities in rural India, exploratory research methodology has been utilized to examine the role of social workers or community developers. The study analyses the new wave of social/public service affecting the lives of India's poorer sections based on personal experience working in various Indian states. The researcher begins with a broad concept for such study and uses it as a means of identifying issues by incorporating the community, which might serve as the focus for future research. Identifying research subjects, organizing and designing the study, selecting progressive farmers, gathering and analyzing data, and interpreting and communicating findings research steps that can involve community engagement.

III.   BACKGROUND

3.1 Community Developer's (CD)/Social Workers Role

Community developers are specialists who work to improve people's and communities' overall well-being by assisting with basic and complicated requirements. The CD works with a range of communities, with a focus on those that are weak, oppressed, or in poverty. CDs have been educated and taught to address social issues and hurdles,

collaborate with government agencies and promote general well-being. Food security, primary education, poverty, unemployment, discrimination and lack of housing, water sanitation, women empowerment, equality, caste barriers, and household problems are a few of these issues (Brackmann, 2015); Helping communities to gain expertise, self-confidence, and control over local events and developments (Bebbington et al. 2006) constitutes one example of community empowerment

3.2 Types of Communities

Geographic communities share a physical space that is physically divided by roads, rivers, and mountains and falls under one panchayat or block, or village. The physical foundation of a village community is its locale. However, for a community to be considered "genuine," its members must share at least specific values, a shared language, festivals, and cultural icons. In some of the typical Indian villages, everyone follows the same caste and religion, and they all share identical clothes, speech, beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors. When I work on watershed projects, each micro-watershed is divided by points of land (hills or slopes) that are at greater altitudes than the other regions. Water flows into distinct watersheds in various directions from these high elevations. Therefore, one or two panchayats with particular characteristics typically fall within one micro watershed. To restore the ecological balance, CD must therefore prepare the project report based on specific geographic areas that involve communities and that cover and improve degraded natural resources, including soil, vegetative cover, and water through watershed management activities.

3.3 Communities of Interest

It is referred to as "communities within communities". Members of these communities choose to affiliate with one another based on a shared concern or interest, such as (for example, the Farmers club, health camps). The villagers didn't receive sufficient medical attention because of transportation issues, a shortage of doctors and

medicines, and shortage of village health workers. In such circumstances, the CD serves as the village's point of contact and is skilled in obtaining primary medical care. The CD frequently conducts medical camps in numerous villages and maintains continuous communication with Primary Health Centers (PHC's) and Doctors. As a result, the villagers are not examined for malnutrition, diabetes, hypertension, orthopedic issues, etc. CD acts as the bridge between PHCs and Communities in the village.

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Figure 4: Health workers are the link between the villagers and professional healthcare

3.4 The Virtual Communities

Its group primarily communicates through communication mediums rather than in-person. They use technology to establish a network known as an online community. The fastest approach to spreading awareness is where people engage in those public dialogues for long enough and with enough humanity to develop personal connection webs. A virtual communication with the community is helpful to assigning, monitoring, and sharing knowledge when the CD are working in different villages in India. During the COVID pandemic, it was really helpful, and there were numerous online meetings with Farmer producers, NABARD, and payAgri Innovation Solutions.

IV.   VALUE AND PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Democratic and Inclusive

The Community Development Program in Indian Villages (CDP) should make sure that all opinions are taken into account such as minority and forest rights and other rights such as cultural, economic, and political rights, right to life, liberty, education and equality before law, vulnerable rights   and the internal solutions are sought. This aids in identifying the groups that require special protection. A multitude of things, such as poverty, impairments, old age, race, and ethnicity, make it difficult to engage in society. All community members have the right to be heard and involved in decisions that affect their lives. The settlement of Sadivayal, a tribal hamlet in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, underwent numerous changes when I was there from 2015 to 2020. It is because community members work together to solve problems as a group, provide a practice that aids in the process of social transformation, and take collective action. Everyone in the hamlet had abandoned farming, which was the primary source of income and food security when I first arrived in 2016. We came up with the solution after many rounds of discussion.

Figure 5: Discussion to Find Solution within the community

All members of the community held a group discussion about the issue, prepared a minute's book, opened a joint bank account, bought seeds through government programs, made organic fertilizer, brought water from the top of the hill by cutting downward streams, and turned 44 acres of fallow land into an organically certified village. It addresses concerns of hunger, unemployment, and food and nutrition security in Sadivayal village. It also meets SDG1 (Eliminate Poverty), SDG2(Erase Hunger), SDG3(Establish Good Health and Well-Being), SDG6(Improve Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG8(Create Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG10(Reduce Inequality)

4.2 Non-Authoritarian

Organizational structures are as flat as they can be, with equal importance and input given to each participant. It's crucial to write down minutes (important points of meetings) for every meeting to maintain a non-authoritarian structure. The written records of meetings are called minutes. These are actually written minutes from the meeting. It contains information about the attendees, the issues brought up, pertinent comments, and the ultimate decisions made to deal with the issues. Every key topic and obligation are documented in the book for future clarification. Maximum participation in all discussions and planning is required. Each community member should be given responsibilities and duties. When the Farmers Club was founded in 2018 Gudupatichervu, each member was given a task and obligation. The minutes of meetings are recorded in a book and the practice became a crucial tool for monitoring the schedules and progress of each team member. It acts as a road map for the team to reach each task or objective. It can also be a useful review tool to gauge your progress as a group and go over significant decisions or achievements at a later time. Even the villages are a six-hour journey to Guntur (main city) with minimum transport facilities. Few farmers are picked from the group and given the responsibility of purchasing seeds. Women's groups are trained to prepare and promote organic manure and save the cost of agricultural produce.

Figure 6: Chili Farming at Gudupatichervu, Andra Pradesh

Twenty-two farmers started cultivating chili cultivation on 43 acres of land in 2018 after joining a farmers' group. After entering a farmers' group, 22 farmers began growing chilies on 43 acres of land in 2018. The average yield of this variety (Teza Lepakshi), sold for 85 to 90 Rs/kg, is 1200 to 1500 kg per acre. Six distinct cotton varieties are being harvested simultaneously on 94 acres of land, with an average yield of 1000 kg per acre. "When cotton is sold for 40 rupees per kilogram, a profit of 23,000 rupees is generated per acre. Each member contributed Rs. fifty to their account, and the group's total savings at the end of the year is Rs. 18000, used for welfare purposes.

4.3 Universality and Community Ownership

Services are available to everyone without requiring means or needs testing. Communities flourish when they create their own assets and "own" their concerns and problems. Communities are more inclined to collaborate to create a solution when they acknowledge that the issue is "theirs," and the resulting solution will be superior to one offered simply by an outside "expert.". While working at Naniborvai Village, we established a dairy unit under Amul's direction. We first identified the issue during our visit to the village and discussion with the local communities. The community has a sufficient number of cows and buffalo, but they have to travel a distance of four kilometers to sell their milk.

Figure 7: Started Dairy Unity at Naniborvai Village, Gujarat

After a few months, we eventually formed a dairy cooperative, addressed the issue, and convinced Amul management to open a dairy unit in Naniborvai. Every solution is found within. Each woman in the group now makes more than Rs 5000 per month through dairy farming. The farmers began organic farming by using manure and applied for organic certification.

4.4 Top- to- Bottom Approach

The difference between the top and bottom approaches employs finding a river as a metaphor for the growing effects of circumstances and occurrences that interfere with the system as it relates to the point of intervention. For instance, if there is an issue at the top, it will influence the river's water quality for everyone who lives below. You can either focus on curing the illnesses that the residents of the upstream area are currently experiencing (bottom approach) or you can stop the spill and prevent others from happening in the future. (Top approach). When we are working in a rural Indian village. After forming farmer groups or as JLGs or SHGs, we learned that many government programs are available to farmers or groups but have not yet reached the end user. Community developers in this case have the responsibility of bridging the communication gap between villagers and local government officials so that the schemes or programs benefit the right individuals. When everyone in the village knows their rights, a bottom-up strategy will work perfectly. The community developer must maintain excellent relationships with all government officials in order for them to timely inform all programs or schemes for managing a top-to-bottom approach.

When working with farmers in Guptapada, Barapita villages of Odisha, no government official had ever visited the hamlet. However, once our coordinator approached the KVK, they set up training programs for, farmers and training conducted at CIFA KVK, Kaushlyaganga, Khordha Odisha for preparing organic fertilizer and Drip Irrigation. 15. farmers from Haridamada village participated in the program and trained in various skills.

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Figure 8: Training programs for farmers conducted at CIFA KVK, Kaushlyaganga, Khordha Odisha

4.5 Enhance Natural Capacities and Networks

Every community has its unique strengths, such as unofficial networks, social support networks, or individuals with particular skills or the ability to assist those in need. These already-existing community resources are found by a community developer who collaborates with them. The society may become weaker rather than stronger if preexisting structures and functions are repeated, therefore this must be avoided at all costs. Every village has a progressive individual who is an expert in local knowledge.

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Figure 9: Preparing Organic fertilizer

We taught farmers how to create organic pesticides and fertilizers in the village of Sadivayal. Farmers who are skilled at making various pesticides from leaves. Everything is based on their experience. The respect that community developers show for the local community and indigenous expertise and their ability to transfer information to them is what makes them successful. Success rates are higher when traditional and modern knowledge are effectively merged.

4.6 Community Self-Determination

Community members gather during meetings to discuss their issues, concerns, choices, and come to their own decisions are left with the best fit solution. When making a final decision, they may consult with "experts," but they also consider data from other sources and their own experiences. Once the farmers club is formed in each village, many officials are invited and begin to frequently attend meetings and offer their professional insight. Conflicts may arise if the knowledge is forced onto someone. Working in situations where everyone benefits is always ideal.

4.7 Social justice and Equity

It is essential to community development and, if not explicitly stated as a program goal, is at the very least implicit, in every CD effort. Working in an Indian hamlet requires us to interact with a variety of communities, each of which has its caste system, culture, and religion. Creating ideas, making decisions, and sharing responsibility are all examples of meaningful community participation and social justice that go beyond physical involvement. People are driven to participate for a variety of reasons, including the need to complete social or religious obligations, the need for a sense of community, and the desire to actively better their own lives. CD must operate

with a sense of justice and accountability, giving each member equal weight.

4.8 Service Integration

There are sometimes gaps, duplications, and perhaps competing advice or treatments since the services supplied to needy people are often fragmented, making it difficult for one care provider to know what other services are available or being used. Here, CD integrates and supports every service provided with the community, having a substantial impact on those services. For example, the community would not gain if two non-governmental organizations opened a tailoring shop in one village. If CD is powerful and knowledgeable about the community, he will ask NGOs to start two different activities to increase the community's income and provide additional jobs.

4.9 Qualities

The core qualities or personal attributes are essential to good community work:

4.10 Integrity

The CD may build connections of trust and respect with others by being sincere, fair, diligent, careful, morally upright, and honest in everything they do. Due to community member's unpleasant experiences, the residents of Sadivayal Village, a tribal hamlet in Coimbatore, where I used to work, didn't believe any official who visited the community with offers. For me, establishing a relationship with the residents and holding meetings in the village required at least three months. Every day I traveled three hours to get to the village, where we sat under a Tree (Fig tree) because there was no office to sit in and work. The interaction with the people only became simple after several conversations, the development of a rapport, and gradually earning each other's trust. Community engagement requires polite and effective communication. Once CD starts a conversation with the members in the village, make sure every cross- section participates in meetings and everyone is aware of the method used, objectives, and desired results. Encourage every member's viewpoint, make sure everyone

has an equal chance to contribute, and have an open mind and no unfair advantages to any members.

4.11 Compassion and Empathy

When working with communities, empathy is a crucial skill to possess. No two villages in India are the same. Empathy entails putting yourself in another person's position, experiencing their emotions, and trying to comprehend their viewpoint. Never push our ideals on the community; instead, always try to listen to their problems. A community services professional must have a strong sense of empathy and compassion because they will frequently come into contact with weak people who may be going through some of their most trying times. It's critical to relate to the clients you serve as a community services worker and to give judgment-free counsel. If CD has compassion and empathy, they try to find a way by connecting the problems with concerned departments.

4.12 Objectivity and Priorities

The processes by which local communities can raise their standards of living are generally referred to by this term "Community economic development (CED)". CED is an alternative to traditional economic development that promotes the use of local resources to improve social results while enhancing economic benefits. When we are working in remote villages, we form farmer's groups to meet local needs such as food, nutrition security, income generation and employment." The goal is to establish things like when farming must begin, how to prepare the land, where to buy quality seeds, how to make fertilizers or pesticides, how often to use fertilizer or pesticide, whether any government programs are available, what each member's duties and responsibilities are, the overall cost of cultivation, and marketing. Priorities should constantly change and be determined by the group's shared concerns.

4.13 Patience & Flexibility

Working in a community the CD required a lot of patients. CD may be dealing with emotional individuals who, initially choose not to heed your

advice. Participating in a community, the conversation raises everyone's level of awareness, enables people to speak up for their ideas, and provides a structure for gathering suggestions or direction based on the knowledge and experiences of the community. Selected volunteers in the community discover that even while they may not be able to help everyone, those they do assist improve their lives and make all the effort worthwhile. When dealing with communities, I typically observe that community members have different goals. Many times, when we fix a meeting in the village, some of them do not attend the meeting because at that time they have some other priorities to fulfill. Some have to drop children at school, and some of them are engaged in bank activities, or marriage functions, or personal work. So, the best option I can think of is to hold meetings in the evening. Being adaptable at all times in recognizing community needs and fostering revolutionary social change. When working with other groups, being adaptable while also being conscious of one's limitations necessitates the requirement for self-awareness.
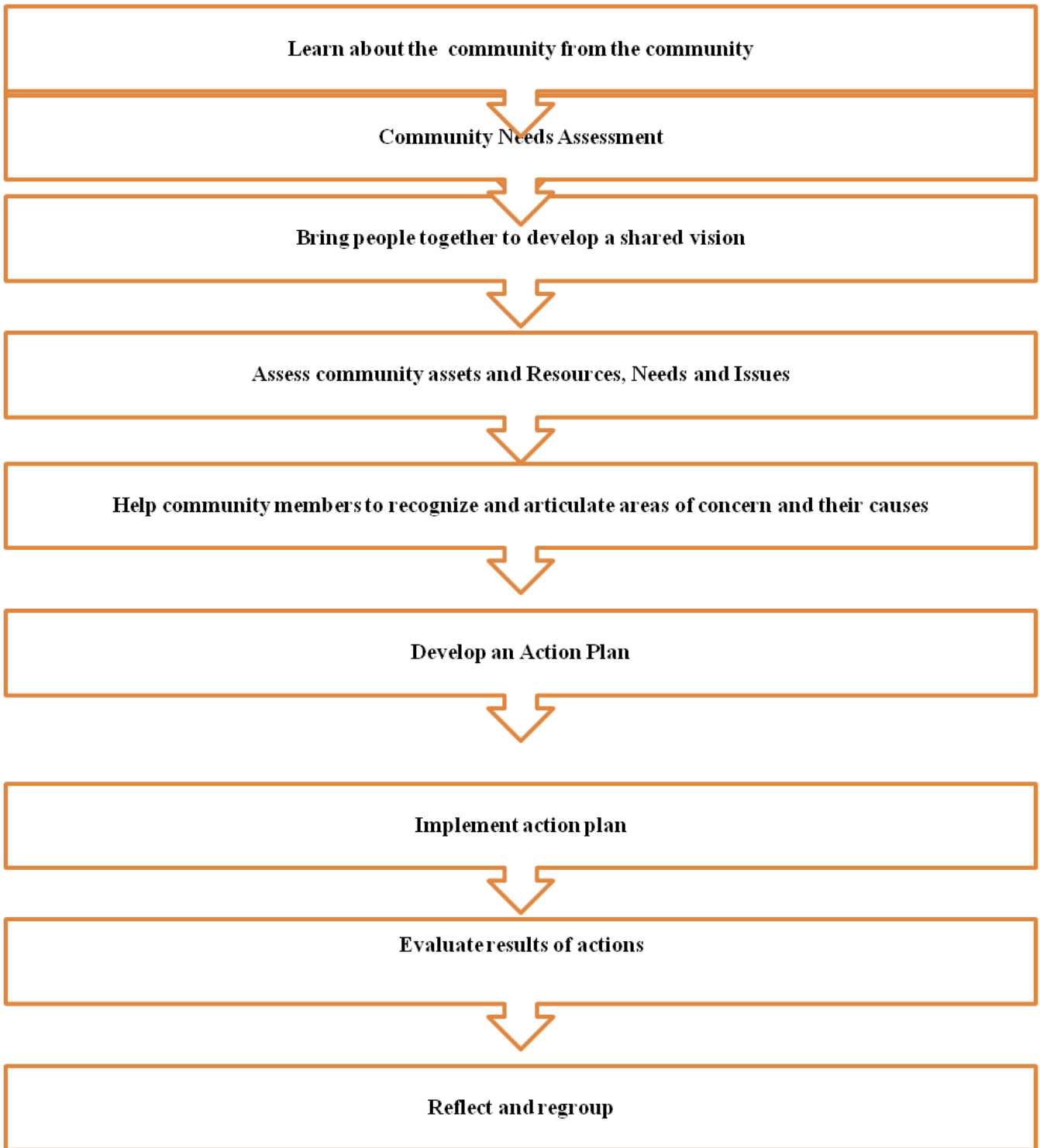
V.   WORK STRUCTURE

Without a vision, however, communities have a limited ability to make decisions about the problems in the villages. It is analogous to driving across different villages without a proper work structure. Before getting people to collaborate, you must assist them in connecting with and developing trust in one another through group meetings with shared objectives. The work structure like a minute's book, bank accounts, soil cards, ration cards, health cards, Aadhaar cards etc to avoid confusion. Community workers typically work with several members simultaneously across different villages in different states, so it is vital to stay organized and connected. The difference between what is and what should be might be described as a need. An individual, a group, or a whole community may experience a need. The needs of the community must be monitored by CD. Analyzing situations carefully enables one to identify what is actually required and promotes future development. This entails organizing files that list ongoing projects, contact information for village and panchayat

officials, bank accounts, and other official and individual member's information. Managing all the responsibilities of a community service won't be a problem for CD if they stay organized. I always kept files for each village where I worked and always used government, training and awareness programs to fulfill the needs of villages. Every village requires a basic infrastructure in order to meet its own needs, and set itself on the path to sustained growth. To achieve the SDG, all basic and support infrastructure related to water, sanitation, housing, health, education, child development, engineered development, clean energy, internet, poverty reduction, and livelihoods-related issues, such as threshing floors, milk chilling plants, fish drying yards, godowns, veterinary sub-Centre, fodder areas, etc.—is essential.

Figure 10: Awareness Program on FPO and Marketing

Learn about the community from the community

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Community Needs Assessment

↓

Bring people together to develop a shared vision

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Assess community assets and Resources, Needs and Issues

↓

Help community members to recognize and articulate areas of concern and their causes

↓

Develop an Action Plan

↓

Implement action plan

↓

Evaluate results of actions

↓

Reflect and regroup

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VI. LEARN ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FROM THE COMMUNITY

The best approach to formation is through community-based information. Try to learn from the community over the first few meetings about their problems and local solutions before implementing them. It gives the confidence to find answers and encourages all members to engage in the process. CD is able to identify issues, resources, needs, the leadership structure, and decision-making processes and helps to develop scientific management and awakens a sense of social responsibility. Significant insights into the community's strengths and faults can also be gained by carefully observing it when you engage with it. An example of formation through information is when I worked at Sadivayal Village. I was gathering data from members about their primary sources of income and the reasons they quit farming. The data helped me to track and study issues related to farming and why farmers left farming. The majority of farmers stopped farming in 2016 because of a variety of problems, including a lack of irrigation facilities, low productivity, lack of adequate use of inputs, poor extension leading to large yield gaps and rising fertilizer and pesticide prices. I then formed a farmers' group farmers most of which are small & marginal farmers and registered under a cooperative society and opened a bank account for farmers to bring more transparency, efficiency, and enhance trustworthiness. Identified the problems one by one and find a solution in groups, channelized water from a hilltop 2.5 km away, and taught participants how to make organic fertilizer (Jeevamrutham & Beejamrutham), pesticides, and insecticides using extracts from five and seven leaves. All of this reduces the upfront costs of farming. We eventually converted the village into an organically certified village with the continued effort and support of the farming community network.

VII. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Reading and observation alone won't teach you what you need to know When CD listens to the community members, he gains the knowledge necessary to assess the community's resources and determine how to use them, as well as the needs of the community and how to best address them. A community needs assessment is a methodical way to identify the requirements and service gaps in a community, as well as the resources and assets that may be used to meet those needs. A multi-step process is necessary to conduct a needs assessment, and it often entails defining a population and collecting data using a set of indicators. Discuss the idea with the villagers and pay attention to what they have to say before fixing a set of hands. To gather adequate information; to make suggestions, judgments, and priorities, CD must be in regular communication with the community. As I've learned, always teach the local community how to gather data for various purposes. Although it initially appears challenging, with good and ongoing training, we may turn community members into resource persons for gathering data for various purposes, including census, health, education, and agriculture. We pick a few young people from each village and provide them with the necessary training; after that, the educated individuals collect the necessary data. It is usually beneficial to boost authenticity. We gathered data in Naniborvai Village utilizing local resources to present to Amul in order to start a dairy unit.

VIII. BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A SHARED VISION

The next stage is to host a community gathering once you have determined that there are some shared interests among community members and you have located a few people who appear willing to work on a community development program. It might be appropriate in some situations to invite government representatives who can help the initiative. The goal of community gathering would be to create a common "community vision. " It would entail imagining their ideal community and conversing with one another about their ideas in order to come up with a shared vision and some broad strategic orientations that everyone would be committed to working towards. You might also use the meetings to solicit support for the project, get community feedback, and invite people to join

a steering committee, or ask them for assistance in other ways. We first identified the issue with community members before looking for a solution together. Every meeting was documented, minutes were prepared, and tasks were given to each member. We include the local panchayat and all government representatives in the forum. Additionally, it promotes transparency and equal respect for all members. One such initiative has been undertaken by SARVATOBHADRA-ORGANIC. To help small and marginal farmers adapt, and fit the system to their needs, the Farmers Club was founded with 50 members after meeting with the Thanniyam Agriculture officer, panchayath members to discuss issues and potential solutions. The farmers club projects seek to provide Anthikad Block Panchayat with a secure supply of food and nourishment. A strategy was created to rebuild the community's agriculture from the ground up, generate additional revenues, and entice farmers to switch to organic farming after realizing the dismal situation of the paddy farmers.

Figure 11: Meeting at SARVATOBHADRA-ORGANIC

To boost food diversity in the diets of the participating families and decrease reliance on the market for fruits and vegetables, a primary intervention undertaken by the program was the distribution of seeds through self-help groups (SHGs) to develop kitchen gardens. Therefore, despite the fact that during the COVID-19 lockdown, deliveries of perishables from other states decreased by more than half, community-led initiatives assist in meeting the total demand for vegetables and fruits in Anthikad Block Panchayat. The project benefitted 6,500 people by assuring food supply and nutrition through kitchen gardening in the block. Scaled-back efforts were made to grow organic vegetables on 13 hectares of fallow land and cover 25 hectares of wetlands with organic paddy agriculture. After 17 years of cultivable wasteland, the decision to try organic farming was complex and had uncertain outcomes. The farmers in Anthikad Block Panchayat, however, are now determined to advance it. The group as a whole has access to irrigation infrastructure and possesses around 25 acres of rich land. The participants outlined their roles and created internal management policies. They began with tasks like choosing crop types, soil testing, seed testing, crop planning, water budgeting, and conservation measures, under the direction of Sarvatobhadra-Organic and with assistance from Krishi bhavan (agricultural office). The group talked through each phase to come up with solutions. Started the kitchen gardens, which assist the participating families' diets become more varied and rely less on the market for fruits and vegetables. By giving 50,000 saplings, seeds, and organic fertilizers to SHG groups so they could start kitchen gardens, the effective model

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was expanded to various wards of the Block. For 6500 families, the project in Block offered food security and nutrition through kitchen gardening. During COVID, less than half as many perishables are arriving from various states and price shoot-ups.

Greater Sustainability It became evident that organic farming offered marginal farmers a more sustainable future because the price of and reliance on agricultural chemicals frequently drove them into losses. The farmers received instruction from SARVATHOBHADRAM-ORGANIC on how to make natural insecticides and fertilizers like Jeevamirtham (a mixture of cow dung and urine, legume powder, and jaggery).

The farmers, in turn, gave their full support and expressed confidence that via this new endeavour, the livelihood of their entire community could be restored and that a better future lay ahead. Numerous checkpoints are constructed on the channel to regulate the water flow, lowering the velocity. The consequence of the group's risk-taking, and experimentation was the sale of a new crop for $.96 (Rs. 70/kg) as opposed to the government's minimum support price of $.40/kg (Rs 28.50).

Figure 12: SARVATHOBHADRAM-ORGANIC – Harvesting Festival

IX. ASSESS COMMUNITY ASSETS AND RESOURCES, NEEDS AND, ISSUES

Always prepare resource mapping that includes data on community, human resources, and natural resources to be able to work effectively in a community development framework. Complete community assessment CD gathers qualitative and quantitative data on a range of community aspects is very beneficial. Unfortunately, time and money constraints frequently make it necessary to select between approaches and restrict the assessment to specific areas of interest. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the community may help determine what and how much information to collect by highlighting some areas as greater priority for action. In the practice of community development, a variety of community evaluation techniques are used. A tool that aids in our understanding of a community's resource base is the Village Resource Map, Social Map; Wealth Ranking Objectives; Local Perceptions of Malnutrition Mapping Objectives; Venn Diagram on Institutions; Resource Cards; Seasonal Calendar; Income and Expenditure Matrix; Daily Activity Clocks; Focus group discussion: Constraints and Opportunities to achieving Nutrition and Household Food Security; Semi-Structured Interview: Household Case Study; Community Workshop and Daily Evaluation and Planning Meeting.

Figure 13: Survey to conduct SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis

X. HELP COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO RECOGNIZE AND ARTICULATE AREAS OF CONCERN AND THEIR CAUSES

In any community development process, it is the community that is in the driver's seat and participates in every step of the development process, including planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. We need to build each other up from the inside and look for locally relevant or indigenous answers. Community members, however, are the ones who are most familiar with the situation and frequently have information and insight that an outside "expert" does not, as well as the ability to spot changes. Community developers enable the community to begin taking ownership of the challenges and creating solutions by offering tools, resources, meeting space, and facilitation.

When we try to implement projects in the villages, we always have more success when we discuss the issue in groups and come up with a local solution. Experts must provide them with technology that satisfies regional requirements. Paddy and Arecanuts are the primary sources of revenue in Byse village, Karnataka.

The members formed SHGs and received training to produce eco-friendly, biodegradable plates from palm leaves that had fallen from trees in order to enhance their livelihood and income. AMMACHI Labs has fixed a pressure machine that is required for giving the plates the right shape to support the women's group with technology and the women groups started manufacturing. It evolved into an environmentally benign substitute for plastic plates, a significant contributor to environmental pollution and a substantial source of cash for women's groups.
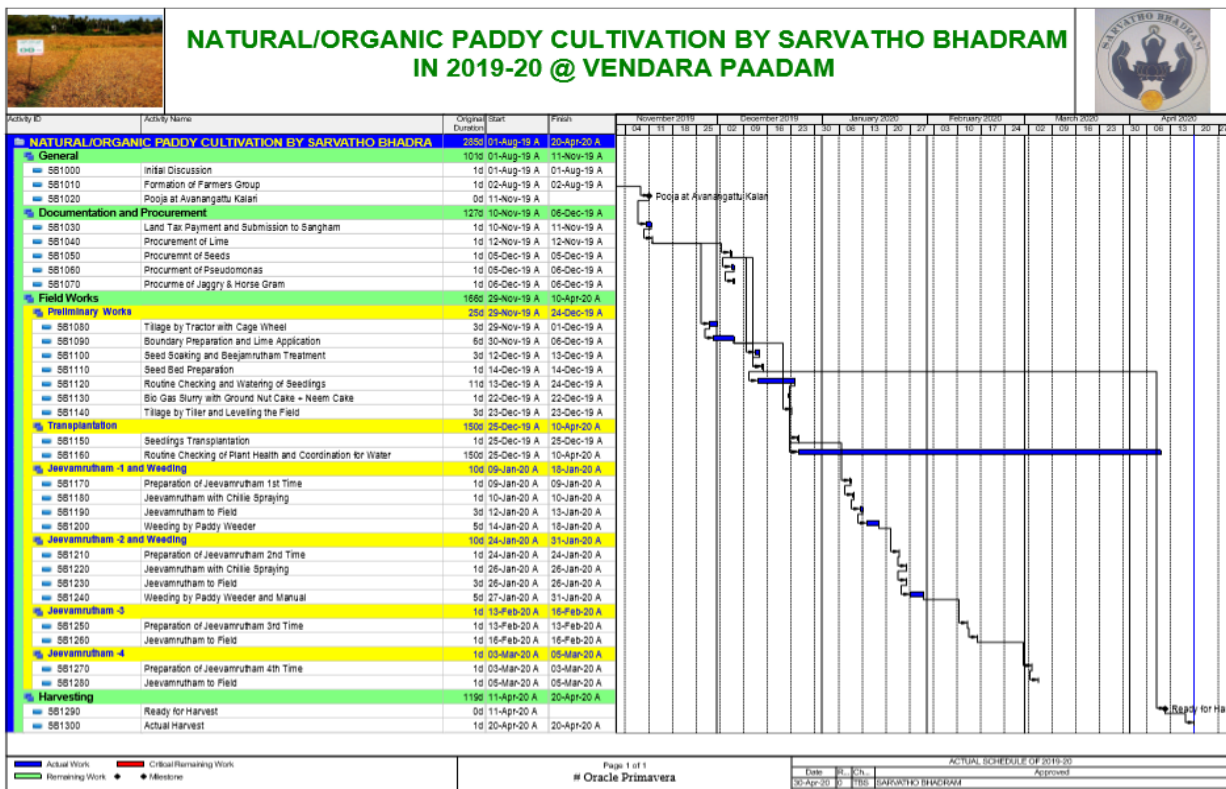
Figure 14: Training to produce eco-friendly; biodegradable Arecanut plates from palm leaves

XI. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

After the initial discussion with members in villages, a strategic plan of action was created. A thorough strategic plan that includes long-, medium-, and short-term goals and mid-level objectives for communications, resource development, and human resources, may be in order. In addition, if there are many activities or events to plan, you will need a separate action plan for each village. The goal is achieved through the project objectives and activities. The objective is to provide a well-thought-out plan that the community can comprehend, that aligns activities to goals and specifies roles, due dates, and resources that are required. The CD had a well-thought-out plan for establishing the farmers club that covered everything from primary tillage to harvesting, followed by branding and marketing. In the vast majority of the villages, we implemented this plan.

Table 2: Action Plan

XII. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

Acton Palan is the core of the effort, where volunteers and community members, as well as financial and human resources, are organized to take action. This could come in a variety of shapes. In communities, we create an agricultural calendar that details the crops to be planted during specific seasons, various irrigation techniques, government insurance programs, the preparation of fertilizer and pesticides, post-harvest practice, and marketing strategies.

XIII. EVALUATE RESULTS OF ACTIONS

Community development professionals have relied less on formal evaluation processes to direct their activity and more on their personal experience and anecdotal information from others. The most crucial thing is that you might have to show that your activities did not affect anyone else. Performing and evaluation may also be necessary to satisfy funding criteria. Plans for evaluation can be formal or informal, depending on the needs and available resources of the group. Participatory evaluation engages community members or program participants in the evaluation design, data collecting, analysis, and result interpretation.

XIV. REFLECT AND REGROUPS

Before starting the next project, give the group time to rest and rethink. Make sure there is good follow-up communication with the media, partners, and funders. Thank everyone who contributed. Celebrate the group accomplishments and consider any potential disappointments. Review the effectiveness of the organizational structures and processes and point out any areas that require improvement before the next surge of activity.

It's crucial to give community members a place to reflect on how being a part of the group has helped them grow personally. When the team is prepared to take on a new project, they may wish to review the results of the community assessment and the strategic goals. It also entails outlining the precise tasks and materials needed to finish the project in order to plan the procedures necessary to achieve those goals.

XV. CONCLUSION

From my experience working in Indian villages, the success of any community program depends upon the "chemistry" between CD and members of the community. Planning is the first step of effective collaboration with the community. Agreement, consideration, and commitment are required for every component of the collaboration, including its goal, function, decision-making process, risks and rewards for each participant, and anticipated outcome (usually by signing a written agreement). Therefore, it is necessary to organize every meeting, work schedule, and prepare a recording of each meeting before approaching government officials or to an implementing agency. Fostering a shared goal among all societal members is essential, and includes participation from every cross-section of society. The program must be designed such that the village economy may thrive at a lower income level, creating jobs for women and young people, rising productivity, and a thriving village economy.

Photos: Courtesy: Amrita SeRVe, Amachi Lab and SARVATHOBHADRAM-ORGANIC

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