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Report of the Training on  
**Participatory Methodology for Community Development**

Phase - 11

Organised by

Aurat Foundation, Pakistan

Held at Lahore

*During Nov. 16-20 1992*

**Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)  
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110062**

This is a brief report of the Phase-II programme organised by Aurat Foundation from November 16-20, 1992.

The objectives of this training were:

1. To enhance our understanding of community organising and group-building processes.
2. To sharpen our skills as facilitators of group development.

All the participants were to reach Aurat Foundation, Lahore office by the afternoon of the 16th after a long wait we all left for the training venue which was about an hours drive from Lahore. On reaching there we tried to informally get to know the participants as the trainers were meeting the participants for the first time.

Before dinner in the process of getting to know each other participants shared their expectations of Phase-II training.

As the trainers were new and as there were very few participants we tried to talk and dispel anxieties related to this situation and assured each other that we would try our best to create and facilitate a learning environment and process.

#### November 17, 1992:

In the morning we were joined by two more participants, so now there were totally 9 participants representing five different NGOs.

To facilitate the process of getting to know each other each one of us identified with an object from nature and through this shared about ourselves, our families, our work and struggles.

For most of us the struggle had started at a very personal level it could either be for the right to study, going for higher education, study a particular subject, struggle for equality in treatment within the family with male siblings, then at a later stage struggle within the institution of marriage it could for equality in relationships, continue to study, continue the type of work, basically all these indicated struggle to find our own space to do things our way.

We found that through these struggles we had grown stronger more confident and courageous, had developed an instinct that does not get dissuaded easily, does not give up easily basically a fighter instinct but this is not in the sense that we normally associate with, of just thinking about self and no one else. As

another aspect of ourselves that we all shared was that we liked to help others, got satisfaction by doing things for others, did not speak openly about our problems at times even if we wanted to speak about our problems we first listened to others. We realised that despite the struggle for space there was a very strong dimension of our personalities that was always eager to give to others and at times this dimension over rode our own desires.

### Meaning of Development:

After this initial exercise of getting to know each other participants divided themselves into two groups and discussed "What we understand by Development and what is our dream of a new society".

The group discussions were presented in the form of a Nazam and a combination of couplet and song. (The presentations are included in Appendix-I).

In sum, the highlights were :

We need to make efforts to change the society where there is peace, happiness, equality, control over resources is in the hands of women and men, involvement of women in decision-making is on substantial matters, women have right to study, employment and be a part of political processes.

Women are recognised, valued, have a position, status of their own and they have an opportunity to do what they want.

In the large group we had further discussions about inequalities arising out of class and gender differentiations. We also tried to understand the role of religion played in perpetuating inequalities related to women.

The issue of control over resources both material and natural was also seen with its effects on the present development process. As most poor people do not have access and control over these resources they have no decision making power and hence end up as mere receivers of the dominant development process.

We also tried to look at control some people exercise over the majority because of the information they have and access to a particular type of education. It was seen that the powerful group in order to maintain its power uses the power of information, money and decision-making and is thus able to continue to oppress a very large portion of our society.

Women's role has only been seen as a reproducer within the domain of "domestic work". Someone who is there to supply a new generation of workers and hence her development is planned only along those lines as an ideal mother, a homemaker, a wife, a household worker etc. Her role as a producer, despite spending hours in the field has generally been invalidated and unrecognized.

The position of women, specially poor women, is the worst affected as they do not have to suffer just because they belong to a particular class but also because of their gender.

Following this context we tried to look at how this can be changed and what roles NGO and its workers can play in this change process.

Through our discussions we realized that changes need to be made at the family level, at the level of woman herself and in the different sections of society and for this NGOs needed to work at all these levels through a process of perspective building/changing, working on different programmes and issues and helping build capacities at different levels of women and the larger community to be able to appropriately intervene in the social change process.

#### Key Constituencies in this Process:

We also looked at the different constituencies in the larger environment with whom NGOs have to interact from time to time. Various political parties, the different departments of the government, the religious bodies, law making and law enforcing bodies, funding agencies, banks, health institutions, other NGOs are some of the constitutes with whom relationships have to be built depending on the work the NGO does. While discussing the social change process the roles that were identified for us as workers were that of working along with the women, being a partner in the search (a joint search), planning along with them and not for them, a catalyst, guide and a supporter of the change process.

#### November 18, 1992:

We started the day with a song and sharing of our impressions about the previous day and a tentative plan for the next two days.

Participants spent some time in reading a paper on Patriarchy.

### Steps in Organising:

Participants first reflected on their own experience and talked about some of the steps they follow, discussions in the larger group helped in further elaborating these steps (Appendix-II).

A film - Dhai Akhar (Part 1 and 2) was shown to help understand how to initiate contact in the community, steps to be followed, people to be met, groups to be met. Second part of the film talked about some of the adult learning principles that need to be kept in mind while working with adults. Participants found the use of the films a very useful medium of learning and they were able to identify with the characters in the film and pick up key elements useful to their own context.

### Group Processes:

In order to understand group processes we first tried to understand what do we mean by groups. Through an exercise efforts were made to understand communication as a process and the elements of communication along with the factors that help or hinder communication. Through another exercise "Parachute" participants tried to understand the elements of a decision-making process. This exercise was video taped, video review helped in further understanding the elements of decision making and also the importance of facilitation to help the group accomplish its task.

A short input on participation, leadership, problem solving helped understand all the processes in a group and participants realised the importance of all these in working with women's groups. (Details of this are in the PRIA Training of Trainers Manual).

### November 19, 1992:

#### Stages of Group Development:

An input on the stages of group development helped in further understanding the groups we work with. There are basically four stages in any group's development and they are cyclic in form, any new entry, departure of a member, break in trust, can make the group reverse back to a stage from which they may have transcended. Issues of inclusion, influence, intimacy are also linked with the stages of group development and as facilitators we need to be aware of them and help the group to move from stage one to stage four which is basically a fully functioning group where task completion is the most important and every member is fully involved in completion of the task. Each member contributes according to their own capacity and there is total ownership of the group by all its members.

### Role of an Organiser:

Participants through reflection in pairs thought about the roles an organiser plays and or is expected to play while working in the community (Appendix-3). This was followed by looking at two films one was on women beedi workers who had organised themselves in a union and another was on women domestic workers. In both these films we tried to understand the elements of organising and the role of the organiser. There was also some discussions on the differentiation between the organised and unorganised sector and the position of women workers in the unorganised sector.

### Women's Development : A Framework:

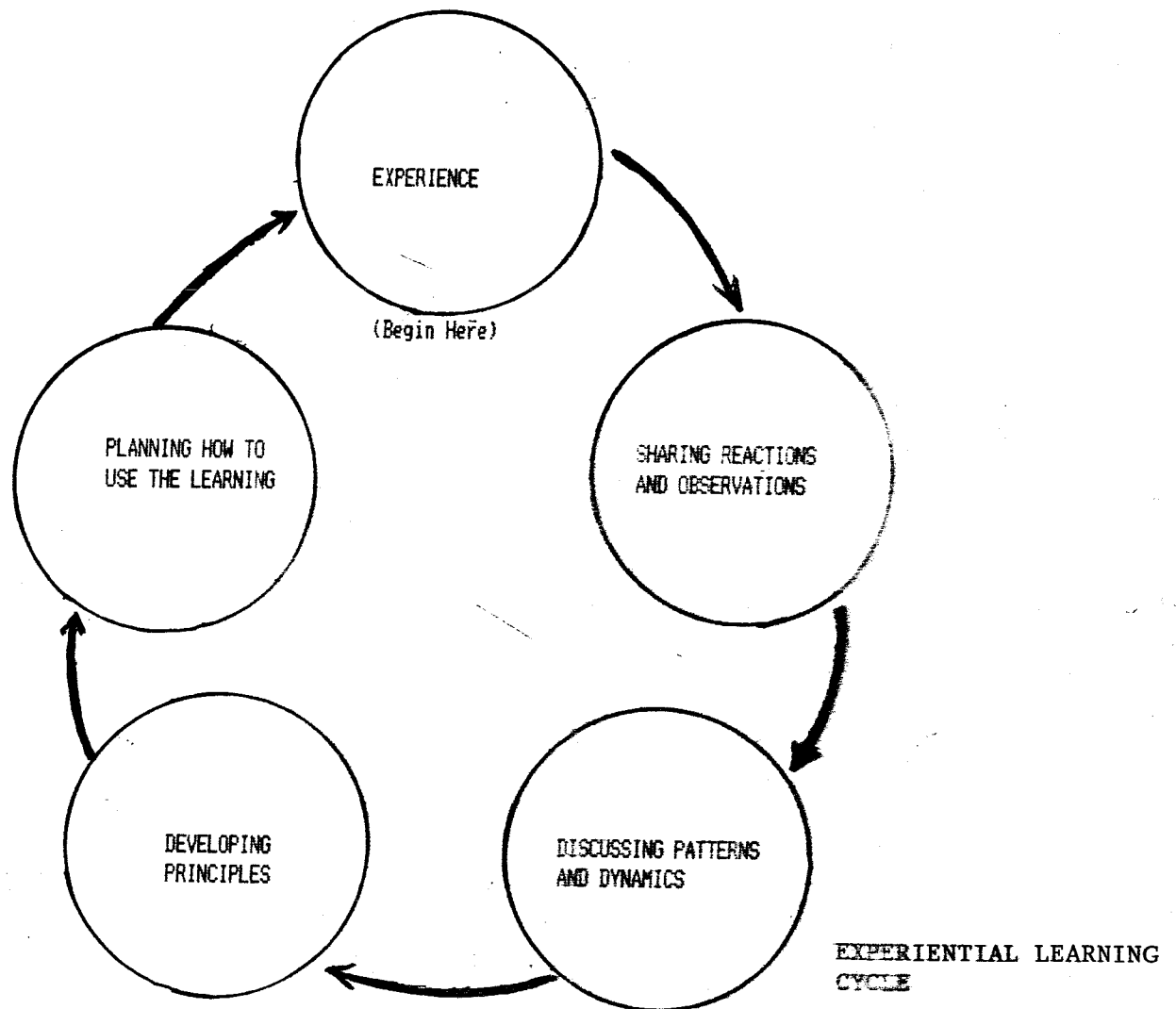
An input on different trends in women's development helped them to see their own work. They were able to identify the shift from women in development to women and development to gender and development and how because of these shifts policies of the government, programmes of the NGO had changed.

A brief paper on this was distributed which participants read and tried to identify where their own programmes fitted in this framework.

### Methods in Organising:

Participants tried to identify the methods they use in organising this was followed by a discussion on methods that can be used in organising the community and in training. (Appendix-IV)

Adults learn best from their own experience but mere experience does not lead to learning unless the experiential learning cycle is complete, learning does not take place hence methods which are based on experiences need to complete this whole cycle if learning has to take place.



**Practise Session:**

To sharpen these skills in organising and also to try out different methods participants in pairs took up an issue and other participants enacting the role of people in the community. They practised their roles within a community situation. At the end of each practise session participants gave feedback which helped build the list of elements to be kept in mind while organising and facilitating. (Appendix-V).

At the end of the day participants felt that the practice session had helped them a great deal as they had tried to apply what they had learnt here by playing it within their own community context and putting that into practice. Feedback after the practice session helped them to become aware of certain things they need to do, be careful about. They also realised some of the difficulties that they would face when they went into the communities.

Trying to work in a small group was a constant challenge for every one, participants were also constantly remembering their friends from phase-I so they spent some time in watching the phase-I video recording to refresh their memories and share with the trainers the plays and singing that they had put up in Phase-I.

November 20, 1992:

Self:

We began the morning by each participant filling for herself a Personal Goal Inventory this helped them to identify who they were, their strengths, weaknesses. This they then shared in the large group after which they made a plan for their self development for the next six months and also shared in the larger group. (The inventory has been translated into Urdu).

Future Planning:

In organisational teams they did constituency mapping, identified key people, departments they would want to link up in the next six months along with some plans of work with the community, women's group.

The training ended with each participant sharing her views about the training, gaps in the training and their expectations in terms of the support they require from Aurat Foundation.

After having lunch together we all left for Lahore.