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Danida and GoTN Water and Sanitation Demand Project - WASDEP

Rural Water Supply Rehabilitation, Sustainable Maintenance and Sanitation in Cuddalore and
Villupuram Districts of the State of Tamil Nadu, India.

ISSUE NOTE:

**MEASUREMENT, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING OF QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF
PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT
IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES.**

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PROJECT ISSUE:

The WS Project provides on a regular basis i.e. fortnightly and half-annually, status reports in which quantitative outcome and process indicators are listed.

These indicators together with expenditure figures are used for monitoring Project progress and assessment of Project success.

Clearly something is missing.

The Project staff members perceive the participation and empowerment process for sustainable water and sanitary facilities in a wider perspective than presented in the reports, but may not be in the position to substantiate it within the framework of a rigid reporting format. This leaves out monitoring of qualitative aspects of participation and empowerment.

It is possible to change this through monitoring of qualitative aspects linked with monitoring of quantitative aspects and consolidated in the respective status reports. For example, monitoring of number of training workshops and number of m/f participants could be improved by adding ranking numbers to qualitative aspects such as: Level of m/f participation in discussions, presentations and changed perceptions.

The following is an illustration of changed perceptions:

The Project staff in general, village leaders and m/f villagers perceive women as physically weak and unqualified for being trained as handpump mechanics and is therefore not promoting it.

A poor village woman, who is also a user group member, challenges this perception by requesting through the village panchayat president (vpp) to be trained as handpump mechanic. The request is accepted by the vpp and the Project. Other women in neighbouring Project villages hear about this and request training through their vpp's. Accordingly another 3 women are accepted for training as handpump mechanics. At a Project workshop for vpp's, user groups and handpump mechanics an additional 3-4 women participants voice their views about their wishes to become mechanics. The result is that before the first training of handpump mechanics is initiated the perceptions about the target groups for training has changed within most of the stakeholder groups, i.e. village women, village leaders and Project trainers.

Consequently the Project bridges the gap between myth and reality by facilitating the breaking-up of a reactionary, oppressive myth of women's inferiority. Or in other words the Project is instrumental in paving the way for empowerment of poor women.

In order to depict changed perceptions it is essential to apply various participatory techniques and tools preferably visual aids, games and ranking exercises. Illustrations of for instance passive/shy women at one end of a photo parade and active female handpump mechanics at the other end illustrates a process of change and social development. To make it participatory it should be the concerned women themselves who in pictures tell the story on how attitudes can change from the oppressive to the self-liberating, i.e. from passive to active participants.

The goal is to make the invisible visible.

ELEMENTS IN CONSTRUCTION OF GUIDELINES FOR MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF QUALITATIVE PROCESS INDICATORS:

The main interest is to assess the extent of participation and empowerment of local stakeholder groups and individuals, e.g. village panchayat presidents and user groups and in particular women members of these groups.

The definition of participation in relation to the Project is here taken to imply the following major components:

1. The perceptions amongst stakeholder groups and individuals of their own and others participation in Project activities such as the various training programmes and PLA-exercises.
2. The degree of solidarity amongst the habitations, rich and poor, women and men to share costs and duties of supply and maintenance of public water facilities.
3. The ability to prevent and/or solve conflicts related to Project interventions, e.g. disconnections of private water connections, participation of SC and women in PLA-exercises and decision-making.

The definition of empowerment in relation to the Project is here taken to imply that:

1. The male and female vpp's and the users participating in PLA-exercises, take control over the preparation of the village water plan.
2. The male and female vpp's and user group members, masons and mechanics who are active participants in training activities are able to demonstrate gained skills, e.g. administer the 4th account, supervise rehabilitation work, maintain and repair water facilities, construct and maintain household latrines.
3. The male and female vpp's, user group members and other trained village members are able to demonstrate increased self-confidence. e.g. participate active in decision-making; voice their views at meetings; show leader-ship capacity, demand access to training (e.g. mason, handpump mechanic).
4. The male and female vpp's and user group members ability to demonstrate their problem-solving skills, e. g. in relation to fund collection, illegal private house connections, preventive maintenance and repair work.
5. The male and female vpp's, user group members, masons and mechanics self-reliance, that is their technical capacity to maintain the water supplies and household latrines without or with minimal support from the Project staff, Union fitters and masons.

PROJECT SPECIFIC INDICATORS TO CAPTURE THE QUALITATIVE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT:

The process of participation is simultaneously seen as a process of empowerment and the indicators are therefore interlinked:

DYNAMIC INDICATORS OF PARTICIPATION:

Ad. 1: Perceptions: Clarify and assess m/f participants views/experiences on/with all the PLA exercises and their outcome.

Ranking : Not-confident (0); Confident (1); Very confident (2).

Ad.2: Solidarity: Clarify and assess the m/f participants views/experiences on/with the decisions made regarding the location of new h/p's; extension of pp scheme; cost-sharing between habitations/individuals; selection of h/h latrine beneficiaries; participation of SC and women in public meetings and vp decision-making.

Ranking: Low (0); Average (1); High (2).

Ad.3: Ability: Clarify and assess the vpp's and other leaders views/experiences on/with illegal h/h connections; solution to the problems caused when requesting for the disconnection; fund-collection; selection of mechanics, masons and user group members. (Acceptance of Project conditions).

Ranking: Negative (0); Indifferent (1); Positive (2).

DYNAMIC INDICATORS OF EMPOWERMENT :

Ad.1: Ability to take control: Clarify and assess the various new initiatives and activities within the village panchayat leadership, user groups and other stakeholder groups. Frequency of contact with Project team, Collector's office, BDO's and NGO's.

Leadership capacity in decision-making and planning processes

Ranking: Low (0); Average (1); High (2).

Ad 2: Ability to demonstrate gained skills: Clarify and assess the functioning of vpp's and user groups, e.g. administration of the 4th account; collection of maintenance funds; maintenance and repair work. Change in practice of use and maintenance of h/p's, public fountains and latrines.

Ranking: Low (0); Average (1); High (2).

Ad.3: Ability to demonstrate increased self-confidence: Clarify and assess expressions of confidence, competence and strength of vpp's, user group members, mechanics and masons. In particular with aspects to challenging views of informal and formal leaders, following own judgements, being able to plan ahead. In the case of female vpp's, reduced reliance on husbands and elders. Assertiveness of female vpp's, user group members, mechanics and masons.

Ranking: Not-confident (0); Confident (1); Very confident (2).

Ad.4: Ability to demonstrate problem-solving skills: Clarify and assess evidence of leadership e.g. judgements in critical situations, e.g. conflicts between stakeholders with respect to O&M, fund raising, adherence to bye-laws.

Ranking: Not-confident(0); Confident (1); Very confident (2).

Ad.5: Ability to demonstrate technical capacity to maintain the water supply facilities and h/h latrines: Clarify and assess the sustainability of the facilities, i.e. technical skills, willingness and affordability of the various stakeholder groups.

Ranking: Low (0); Average (1); High (2).

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INDICATORS:

The gender-role of women as main providers and managers of household drinking water makes them a mainstream target group in drinking water and sanitation projects in general and therefore also in this particular Project.

Four women specific empowerment indicators in relation to female vpp's and user group members are selected as follows:

1. **Mobility:** Women's access to and participation in meetings and training activities both inside and outside the village panchayat. Women's options to conduct follow-up visits to the Project office and GoTN offices.

2. **Decision-making and control:** Women's active participation in planning of the water plan, e.g. site selection of new facilities and maintenance work. Involvement in selection of household latrine beneficiaries.

Female vpp's and user group members attendance and assertiveness in local leadership; i.e. selection of contractors; preparation and enforcement of bye-laws for maintenance.

3. **Financial matters:** Female vpp's and user group members capacity to handle the vp 4th account, i.e. Project account, settling bills with contractors and raise funds for maintenance cost.

4. **Social status:** Female vpp's and user group members, mechanics and masons higher acceptance by husband, informal and formal vp leaders, e.g. improved access to information and decision-making in household and community matters respectively. Improved consultation with, e.g. GoTN staff, contractors and Project staff. Improved involvement in non-traditional activities and capacity to influence vp agenda-setting. Improved income. Improved networking between village women.

Ranking of the four indicators: Low (0); Average (1); High (2).

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITATIVE INDICATORS AND REPORTING:

The qualitative aspects of the process of change ranked by the concerned m/f villagers through various participatory activities, including photo parade and story-with-a-gap, should be assessed by the FO/TE/DTF Coordinator in relation to a force-field-analysis and/or resistance-to-change-continuum or any other participatory technique (*).

The assessment of the qualitative impact should be included in half-annual reports to the GoTN and Embassy making references to the overall principles of Danida, namely poverty reduction, gender equality, participatory development and good governance.

Obviously the quantitative reporting on participation should entail accurate and adequate information on poverty and gender disaggregated data in relation to population, vpp's, participants in PLA exercises and training activities in order to be linked with the qualitative impact assessment. These data indicates in a gender-specific way the total number of people met in Project activities, and is as such useful information in respect to data on target groups. In addition, the reporting on PLA activities should indicate the time use by stating the specific dates of the respective activities. This in order to indicate the human resource use, time-use and time-span before physical implementation activities are initiated. The type of data is furthermore essential for justification of some of the important causes of slow physical progress, often beyond Project control.

Finally it is important to keep in mind that the significance of assessment of qualitative indicators is not validity and reliability in the conventional methodological sense, but impact on the perceived participation and empowerment for social development and sustainable livelihoods.

In concrete practical terms the attached 3 formats should preferably be completed half-annually in a selected number of VP's in each district.

The formats together with with a consolidated analysis/assessment of the scoring results should be included in the overall Project half-annual status report.

The 3 formats should be included in the computerized Project Information Management system.

* The SARAR participatory methodology developed by Dr. Lyra Srinivasan, UNDP/PROWESS.

FORMAT ON QUALITATIVE INDICATORS ON PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION	Female Vill.Pan.Pres	Male Vill.Pan.Pres	Female User Group Member	Male User Group Member	Female Mechanic	Male Mechanic	Female Mason	Male Mason
A. PERCEPTION								
1. PLA								
2. User Group Training								
B. SOLIDARITY								
1. Location of Water Facilities								
2. Cost Sharing								
3. Selection of HHL Beneficiaries								
4. Women Participation in public Meet.								
C. ABILITY								
1. Disconnection of House Connections								
2. Fund Collection / Contribution								
3. Selection of Mech, Masons, User Group Members								
TOTAL								

Ranking : 0,1,2,3,4

High : 32 - 36 ; Good : 24 - 31 ; Average : 16 - 23 ; Low : 8 - 15 ; Poor : 0 - 7

FORMAT ON QUALITATIVE INDICATORS ON EMPOWERMENT

EMPOWERMENT	Female VII.Pan.Pres	Male VII.Pan.Pres	Male User Group Member	Female User Group Member	Male Mechanic	Female Mechanic	Male Mason	Female Mason
A. CONTROL								
1. New Initiative and Activities								
2. Frequency of Contact Visit to :								
Project Team								
Collector's Office								
BDO's								
NGO's								
3. Leadership Capacity								
B. GAINED SKILLS :								
1. Functioning								
2. Administration of Funds								
C. SELF - CONFIDENCE								
1. Confidence								
2. Competence								
3. Strength								
D. PROBLEM - SOLVING SKILLS								
1. Judgements in critical situations								
2. Conflict - Resolution								
E. TECHNICAL CAPACITY								
1. Adherence to bye - Laws								
2. Maintenance								
3. Repair Work								
4. Fund Collection								
5. Changed Practices								
TOTAL								

Ranking : 0,1,2,3,4

High : 51 - 60 ; Good : 36 - 50 ; Average : 23 - 45 ; Low : 11 - 22 ; Poor : 0 - 10

FORMAT ON QUALITATIVE INDICATORS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	Female Vill.Pan.Pres	Female User Group Member	Female Mechanic	Female Mason
A. MOBILITY				
1. Attend Meetings / Trgs in VP				
2. Attend Meetings / Trgs outside VP :				
3. Visit Project office / BDO's / NGO's				
B. DECISION - MAKING CONTROL				
1. Planning of water scheme				
2. Site selection				
3. Selection of HHL Beneficiaries				
4. Selection of Contractors				
5. Preparation and enforcement of bye- Laws				
C. FINANCIAL MATTERS				
1. Adm. of the Fourth Account				
2. Settling of Bills with Contractors				
3. Raising funds for Maintenance / Repair				
D. SOCIAL STATUS				
1. Higher Acceptance				
2. Improved access to info.				
3. Improved consultation				
4. Improved involvement in Non traditional Matters				
5. Influence on VP Agenda - Setting				
6. Improved income				
7. Improved women networking				
TOTAL				

Ranking : 0,1,2,3,4

High : 61 - 72 ; Good : 46 - 60 ; Average : 31- 45 ; Low : 16 - 30 ; Poor : 0 - 15