

Chapter VII. PLANNING PERSPECTIVES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Introduction

The need for training is universally accepted and has been the subject of many reports. For example it has been recorded (1) that a package of training programmes should be prepared which would give training to women through various channels and encourage the growth of entrepreneurship, organising capacity, general awareness and knowledge of legal matters. The Central and State Social Welfare Boards, Women's Development Corporations, and other agencies should be used and voluntary organisations should be given grants to implement the programmes.

The researcher, aware of this need had determined to make action research a part of her main work. How this was planned is the subject matter of this chapter.

The Background

Restricting oneself to the immediate past - say 2 or 3 years, it is necessary to record that a series of seminars or meetings took place during which a number of points relating to rural women were discussed. It was during these meetings that the idea of a training programme evolved and took shape. The researcher had attended all these seminars as a voluntary social worker.

The first seminar that can be mentioned was held on 19th and 20th November, 1987. The main topic was developing the potential of the office bearers of the mahila mandals. It was held at Pune in one of the class rooms of the Vidyarthi Sahayak Samiti. About 39 persons attended, including a number of eminent personalities from the educational and social field. The GDPO, the Mukhyasevikas and some AWWs also attended.

The seminar broadly covered the following areas :

- (a) The present state and status of rural women.
- (b) The slow pace of development and the need to help the rural women.

Following it, was a very large gathering - a mela rather than a seminar - held on 22nd January, 1988. In all nearly 700 persons attended. All the Anganwadi workers, and the chairpersons of nearly 250 Mahila Mandals, the mukhyasevikas, the C.D.P.O., and other officials, politicians, representatives of voluntary agencies, and other dignitaries from the educational and social field were present.

A number of speeches were made, and a number of promises given. Khed had never seen such a large gathering before and it brought a lot of media coverage to the politicians, the officials, and the voluntary agencies. It also brought about a wave of enthusiasm amongst the rural women for they felt that at last some of their problems would be solved as promised from the dais. Alas ! they were soon to be disillusioned because it was obvious to any keen observer that nothing concrete would come out of this mela.

The voluntary agency associated with it was also aware of this fact and it decided that a small group had to be formed to follow up on the broad ideas aired at the gathering and work out details. It was decided to proceed in the following phases :

- (a) In Phase I government officials would be made aware of the position and status of rural women and the various government schemes available.(2).
- (b) In Phase II the methodology and technique of giving training would be developed.
- (c) In Phase III a Trainers Training Camp would be held where selected women would be given a thorough grounding in selected subjects and taught how to impart instruction and training.
- (d) In Phase IV, these trained women would in turn teach other rural women and pass on the information they had learnt. 9 such camps would be held and the accent would be to get the Mahila Mandal office bearers to attend.

The task of the Committee was as given below :

/ (a) To

- (a) To develop the contents and other details of the programme.
- (b) To lay down the guide lines for selecting trainers.
- (c) To estimate the financial requirements and work out a budget.
- (d) To lay down the guide lines for review and assessment of the whole programme at the end of Phase IV.

The Committee met but once and what had started with a bang petered out to an end. It was left to the researcher and the Academy for Education and Youth Services (herein after referred to as the Academy) to carry on with the idea.

Association of the Researcher with the Academy

Quite apart from the present doctoral work, the researcher had, from time to time, worked with the Academy (and other voluntary agencies) on a purely voluntary basis due to her interest in social work. She had organised and attended seminars and had taken a few sessions.

When the scope of the present work was being finalised, the researcher felt that she herself would like to include a training programme as a kind of action research in the main thesis. This resolve strengthened during the 1987 and 1988 seminars. For this purpose she sought the academy's help, and the latter agreed to join in her venture. The main reasons for seeking an association with the Academy were as follows :

- (a) The Academy (3) has a standing of over ten years in the social welfare field.
- (b) The researcher could freely use the infra-structure and facilities established by the Academy over these years.
- (c) The researcher could draw upon the expertise of other resource persons through the Academy.
- (d) The Academy was prepared to fund the Training Programme to a certain extent. The researcher, on her own,

/ would not

would not have been able to incur this expenditure.

The result of this association, good or bad, has been dealt with later.

Planning the Training Programme

Once the joint venture was decided upon, considerable thought was given to the shape that the training programme should take to achieve the best results. Ultimately it was agreed that there would be two phases.

- (a) In Phase I a selected number of women would be given intensive coaching in selected subjects, and equip them to become trainers. This would be a residential programme of three or four days duration.
- (b) In Phase II these trainers would, in turn, train and instruct women from different villages, and particularly the office bearers of the Mahila Mandals. It would be a non residential programme held at a few selected central locations.

This mode of arranging the programme became necessary due to the following reasons :

- (a) The researcher and the Academy did not have the time or resources to arrange a series of training sessions at a large number of villages and conduct such sessions over a very large time frame.
- (b) The researcher had found out that not many women were prepared to attend a four day residential programme.
- (c) Organising and conducting a programme meant, inevitable, consulting the C.D.P.O. and his ideas and requirements had to be met. The C.D.P.O. controlled the AWWs and the latter controlled the Mahila Mandals.

Due to all these reasons, on some of which the researcher had no control, the final shape was to follow the pattern given below :

- (a) A four day residential programme at Pune for selected

/ women

women to develop them into trainers.

- (b) A series of follow up programmes where these trainers would, in their turn, instruct women called from different villages. These sessions would be non residential, enabling women to come in the morning after finishing essential household chores, and return in the evenings to their homes.
- (c) 12 such follow up sessions would be taken after which the entire subject would be reviewed.
- (d) The association of the researcher with the Academy, as far as this doctoral thesis was concerned, would end after four such sessions.

Terminology

In order to avoid semantic confusion it was decided to use the following terminology as suggested by the researcher.

- (a) Training Programme (TP). The main training programme held at Pune. The word training includes guidance.
- (b) Participants. Women selected to attend the above.
- (c) Trainers. Women selected from amongst the participants at the end of the TP who would become instructors for the subsequent programmes.
- (d) Follow Up Seminars. Non residential meetings and sessions arranged for a group of women/ Mahila Mandals at a convenient place. These sessions would be conducted mainly by the trainers assisted by the researcher and staff of the Academy.
- (e) Learners. Women who attended the above.
- (f) The Team. The researcher, the staff of the Academy and the C.D.P.O. where necessary.
- (g) Resource Persons. Members of the Team or other persons invited to lecture at the training programme or the follow up seminars.

Role of the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO)

In both the I.R.D.P. (Integrated Rural Development Programme) and the I.C.D.S. (Integrated Child Development Services) it was visualised that while the gramsevikas, mukhyasevikas, extension officers and others would be government servants working under the P.D.O. or the C.D.P.O., the village level worker or the Anganwadi Worker would be volunteers - women from the villages who would be paid an honorarium or stipend but who would not be government servants but volunteers.

But, in fact, the AWW is treated, and allows herself to be so treated, as much a government servant as anyone else. She is totally under the 'orders' of the C.D.P.O.. Thus, these two women, the mukhyasevika and the AWW - the key factors in any development or other work, would not have attended the training programme or the follow up seminars without the specific consent of the C.D.P.O.

The C.D.P.O. also has considerable local contacts and can arrange resources like a place for holding the meetings, durrus, tables, chairs and so on. He could do this more easily and quickly than the researcher or the Academy. Thus, willy - nilly the P.D.O. had to be accepted as a member of the Team. The effect of his influence, good or bad, is discussed later.

Selection of Participants

Initially it was thought that selecting the participants for the training programme would be easy. Accordingly, wide publicity was given and over 150 women turned up for interview. 3 class rooms of a local school at Uhed were taken over for holding the interviews which were conducted by the team less the CDPO. At the end women were paid travelling allowance, the funding being done by the Academy. Actually the Mahila Mandals had made a token contribution of Rs. 750/- to the Academy towards the entire programme. The sum collected was Rs. 2,500/-

The criterion for the selection of the participants was fixed as follows :

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- (a) Minimum educational qualification - 7th standard.
- (b) Preferred age group - 24 to 35 years.
- (c) Good communication skill and motivation.
- (d) Willingness to attend a residential training programme of 3 to 4 days duration at Pune.
- (e) Willingness to conduct Follow Up Seminars if selected as trainers.
- (f) Non-insistence for a stipend - the lodging and boarding at Pune being provided free.
- (g) As far as possible the candidates should be members of Mahila Mandals.

The interviews were started with high hopes that at-least twenty good candidates would be short listed. But alas ! Facts proved otherwise. The team found only five candidates who fulfilled five or more conditions laid down and out of these five, three turned out to be AWWs who said that they would need the commission of the CDPO to attend. It is, indeed, tragic to record that out of over 150 women a suitable cadre of even twenty was not forthcoming.

Faced with this situation there was no alternative but to seek the help of the CDPO. He nominated 14 mukhyasevikas and 6 AWWs, overruling the names of a few AWWs suggested by the researcher. He also nominated two other women who were interested in poultry work, although poultry training was not one of the subjects to be covered in the Training Programme.

It is said that well begun is half done. In this case the researcher and the Academy had to start on a wrong, or an unintentioned note.

REFERENCES

- (1) Shramshakti. p. 299.
- (2) To make Government officials aware of Government schemes appears ridiculous.
- (3) A Note on the Organisation and Work of the Academy is placed at Appendix 'N'.