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The Process of Empowerment

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Context

The control over knowledge, and corresponding knowledge production systems confers decision-making power. This in turn increases access to and control over resources. The views and meanings of people who control strategic relationships and resources- *the haves* are frequently thought as real and are regarded as unquestioned 'givens' by the *have-nots* i.e.-poor, and the oppressed people. People's internalization of the ideologies of power relations as a natural state of affairs affect the ability of less powerful groups to participate in formal and informal decision-making and to exert influence. (Gujit & Shah: 1998: 26). Their powerlessness is, therefore, linked to the devaluation of their own knowledge.

The exercise of power through control over knowledge has been further consolidated with the help of organized modern research enterprise. Modern knowledge has created an alienation of wisdom from popular knowledge. In its passion to measure and quantify, it has disregarded the experiential and intuitive insights of popular knowledge. Professional centralized knowledge in its generation and utilization often neglects the actors in the situation as sources of knowledge as well as its legitimate owners.

The creative process of responsible, all-embracing and useful knowledge making entails a dialogical research oriented to the social situation in which people live. It begins with the question why, the answer to which lead simultaneously to conscientization, social research and praxis. (Borda Orlando Fals: 1985:94) Research, which exposes the power of oppression, empowers persons to take practical actions to change the oppressive situations. This is often in the form of participatory research where groups through a process of conscientization define, conduct and interpret and take collective action on their own research. (Deshler & Selener: 1991: 14)

Participatory Research (PR) embodies the values and the philosophy of popular system of knowledge production. It believes on commitment to collective participation, and

empowerment of ordinary people in having and knowing their world; in envisioning a new society and in playing their collective roles in the process of transformation.

The two crucial elements in PR as a process of empowerment are: collective organization of the disadvantaged marginalised groups and learning to exercise informed choices within an expanding framework of information, knowledge and analysis of the options available. Strategies for empowerment generally include:

- The poorest and the oppressed section of society;
- Creation of distinct space and time for these groups to enable them to evolve into a cohesive collective;
- Promotion of their self-recognition and positive image by stimulating the critical thinking and deepening the understanding of the structures of power, including gender;
- Expanding their knowledge base through access to information, knowledge and skills;
- Enabling them to identify and prioritize the issues for action based on expanding awareness, critical analysis and informed decision-making;
- Enabling them to formulate a vision of alternative society, including alternate models of social and economic relations and alternate development paradigms;
- Strengthen them to struggle independently for changes in: their material conditions of existence; their personal lives and their treatment in the public sphere;
- Training of activists/change agents who are aware and politically conscious to interact with, mobilize, learn from and raise consciousness of such deprived groups; and
- Facilitate formations of mass organizations at local, regional, national and international levels for advocating changes in the structures. (Batliwala: 1993:)

The rationale of this study is twofold. Firstly, the investigation is in response to the concerns to seek alternate forms of development, which foster more inclusive and deliberate forms of citizen engagement. Participative grassroots initiatives, a live praxis, have multiplier effect, leading people's movement towards inclusive and participative citizenship. Understanding the attempts at empowerment and thereby social change can

contribute to the current concerns on alternative social practice from the rights and citizenship-based perspective.

The second rationale of the study is related to the need to undertake research on the practices within civil society organizations in order to explore the linkage between civil society organizations and adult learning. Some of the innovative educational work has occurred within civil society organizations. There is little research of these practices. These need to be the focus of research.

By focusing on the strategies for empowerment used within PRIA and other community organizations for the empowerment of the grassroots, this study aims to understand the potential of empowering spaces for citizen voice.

Section I: Study Framework

Objectives

The objectives are as follows:

- To explore linkage between civil society and adult learning.
- To examine PRIA's own experiences to facilitate systematic learning and reflection among the grassroots, groups and organizations thereby promote grassroots empowerment.
- To document, analyze and synthesize some other experiences in grassroots empowerment in India.
- To interpret the practices within case studies to understand how these contribute to empowerment.

Research Questions

To explore the above issues in depth, the following research questions have guided the analysis of the process of empowerment within PRIA and other organizations.

- What mechanisms are used to promote the process of empowerment?
- How does the process of empowerment strengthen the grassroots?
- How do these processes contribute to organizational consciousness for undertaking collective actions in common interests?

Conceptual Framework

Essential elements in the process of empowerment are

- Building a critical awareness of the present growth model of development particularly among those worst affected by it.
- Facilitating the articulation of an alternative concept.
- Mobilization and organization of the marginalised and disempowered people to challenge and transform the existing discriminating system.

- Building of alternative democratic institutions and mechanisms to support the process. (Batliwala: 1993:46)

Research, training, organization and mobilization of the grassroots have served as the entry points for probing and analysis of the strategies of empowerment within case studies. These entry points can be instrumental in grasping what is implicit in praxis: that understanding the world and changing it are one. Research, education and practice linked to collective action (organization) results in a new proletarian worldview.

Following operational concepts have been developed to understand the process of empowerment.

Awareness: Learning about present reality, the dynamics of society, values of one's identity, and of being organized generates critical awareness (conscientization). It leads to an understanding of the problems and motivates people to undertake self-initiatives for change. Awareness has both an intellectual and emotional aspect-cognitive as well as emotional understanding. This brings the sensitivity to the problem and its causes.

Participation and Control: Participation is active involvement of concerned persons in various stages of the learning process, viz. definition of the problems, the learning needs and goals, collecting and analyzing the problems or designing the programmes, and using the analysis to enhance one's position, knowledge. Learners have greater degree of control, and responsibility vis-à-vis program activities. They gain control over critical resources such as external expertise, know-how, capital and technology etc.

Mobilization and Organization: Coming together of people around a specific issue to think, plan and act, is mobilization. People tend to start with problems of immediate concern. With increasing conscientization and experience of participation in planning action they diversify their actions to include larger issues. The success of one action sets in motion the flow of successive joint actions to improve their lives. Collective actions require consciousness of the (a) need for organizing, and (b) availability of organizational

mechanisms in which people have confidence, over which they have control, and which they can use as organs for their actions. People may organize themselves in a manner, as decided by them, that best suits their purposes. They may build new organizations of their choice or use existing organizations over which they have effective control as instruments of actions.

Methodology

This study is essentially based on the review of secondary literature. Restricting the source of information to secondary literature has enabled the review of the performance of PRIA and other leading organizations in a short span of one year. It is organized in three sections. Section I provides the conceptual background for the study. Case Studies in the section II examine experiences of PRIA and other organizations in the empowerment of the grassroots within India. Conclusions in section III interpret the practices within case studies and draws lessons.

Section II: The Case Studies

Voluntary Development Organizations (VDOs) or Non Government Organizations (NGOs) are important constituents of the civil society organizations. Some are local voluntary organizations or social action groups, directly facilitating education and organization of the grassroots. They are essentially involved in the work of awareness generation, service delivery, policy advocacy, and in research. They use a range of development inputs or activities towards this end. Some organizations provide professional support to activists, local voluntary organizations and other intermediary organizations such as technical, management, knowledge, information and capacity building support. The purpose is to enable them to perform their roles as change agents in a more effective manner.

Transmitting empowerment to grassroots communities through the process of intermediation is an effective strategy for the following reasons.

- The large number of poor and the marginalized people are not organized into groups through which they can improve their lives. They are unaware of their reality, dynamics of power relations their collective interests, the value of being organized, and value of their own experiences and identity.
- Grassroots CBOs, NGOs, VAs often do not possess skills of mobilizing and organizing people, planning and implementing collective actions, collecting/processing/disseminating relevant information and influencing others. They need help to get better organized. They also do not possess skills in-house to make necessary additions to their ability in light of changing trends such as the PRI initiative that decentralizes government to devolve the decision making power and resources to the grassroots. They need capacity building support. (Holloway and Banerjee:2001:9)

Case studies selected for this study vary from efforts to articulate and aggregate the concerns of the marginalized groups through research and advocacy to building capacities to organize and mobilize for action. Primarily the focus is on PRIA. Other

local voluntary organizations and social action groups have also been selected to understand the diversities in empowerment initiatives.

I PRIA

PRIA, as a social change organization, is dedicated to the cause of citizen participation and empowerment. It provides support to grassroots groups to promote empowerment of the marginalized with following objectives:

- Sensitizing them to the issues of the marginalized so that they integrate them in their work;
- Assisting them to reflect, plan, implement, document their experiences; and
- Provide support in the form of information, networking, and strengthening.

PRIA recognizes that marginalised have been systematically excluded from knowledge production. Participatory research as an educational process assists the deprived and the powerless to articulate and produce knowledge from their point of view and experiences (popular knowledge). Participatory research is also a process of appropriation and analysis of dominant knowledge system and values. People learn to recapture their tools of knowledge production and use it collectively for common benefits. PRIA provides educational support to grassroots groups to use, promote and enhance the philosophy of participatory research amongst the marginalised.

PRIA's work is organized into thematic clusters with an overarching mission to promote participation and empowerment. For instance, **Centre for Local Self-Governance (LSG)** aims to contribute towards making Panchayati Raj and municipal bodies as effective institutions of local self-governance and empower a new generation of leaders, particularly women, dalits and tribals. **Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Industrial Development (ESID)** strives towards empowering and promoting the participation of workers and community in assuring an environmentally sustainable industrial development. **Centre for Civil Society & Participatory Development (CSPD)** seeks to promote deeper understanding of civil society actors; to enhance their contributions in democratic governance in society; and promote effective participation of primary stakeholders in development policies and programmes. The objective of

Information Resource Centre (IRC) is to promote effective use of information as a vehicle for participation and empowerment. These centres are not mutually exclusive. They link together in practice in empowering citizens for inclusive and participative citizenship. Each programme thrust areas utilize the three broad strategies of empowerment viz., capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. As a process these strategies have led to enhanced consciousness and increased competencies of the marginalized groups.

Description of the Mechanisms

Capacity building, knowledge building, and policy advocacy are PRIA's three on going strategies to enhance empowerment. These augment the critical learning of the marginalized, strengthen their organizations, and facilitate collective action towards change in power relations.

Capacity Building entails strengthening the capacities of intermediary groups: grassroots groups, trade unions and voluntary development organizations (VDOs). Actors include citizens, citizen organizations, support organizations, government agencies, donors and academia. Capacity building support comprises support through structured training and workshops, ongoing field support, exposure visits, and field placements. Participatory training methodology has guided the capacity building interventions. As an approach participatory training is based on the philosophy of participatory research. It aims at empowerment of the oppressed by legitimizing their knowledge, and builds on it to initiate new learning. Learning includes change at the level of knowledge, awareness and skills, which in turn brings individual, collective and societal change. Participatory evaluation facilitates capacity building of VDOs. The process of participatory evaluation recognizes and legitimizes VDO staff's knowledge, as against those of external donors and consultants. It puts them in control of the process of critically reviewing its work and strategy, assessing the effectiveness and relevance of its work at the same time making relevant changes to ensure the same. The need for greater professionalization of their development interventions has led to institutional capacity building interventions. Support of PRIA in this context includes the management of VDOs, organization development, financial management, process documentation and participatory training.

Knowledge Building implies engaging in critical and systematic study of issues and institutions, which enable or prevent citizen participation in the democratic process. The focus of the strategy is to empower citizens to critically examine and monitor the processes that govern their lives. In-depth studies serve the twin objectives of developing an alternative authentic database and of developing awareness and mobilization of grassroots and activists. Alternate database developed from the point of view of grassroots could effectively critique the proposed policy and mobilize them for their organization and struggle. New knowledge, in turn, helps them to shape their own lives. This is the essence of PRIA's philosophy "Knowledge is Power".

Policy Advocacy relies on the building of networks, coalitions and alliances of like-minded individuals and organizations to facilitate dialogues across differing perspectives and players. It establishes linkages and accountability between micro and macro issues through a systematic and continuous monitoring of existing policies and their implementation. Armed with this information it plays a crucial role in influencing the reformulation of policies from the vantage point of enabling participation and empowerment of the marginalized.

The Initiatives

The sectoral components around which the grassroots have been organized and sensitized relate primarily to natural resource management, workers education and occupational health and safety, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Gram Sabha members, civil society organizations like women's groups. Following brief sector wise description will highlight the ways the grassroots have been sensitized and organized.

Natural Resource Management

PRIA got involved in the issue natural resource management through a campaign to protect forests and the forest dwellers, against a discriminatory policy, which was likely to be enacted in early 1980s. In order to influence that policy, PRIA conducted participatory research studies on issues of forests and forest destruction, in the states of

Himachal Pradesh and Orissa. These studies took place in 1982-83, which resulted in bringing together activists to explore the issue of land ownership and alienation with particular reference to tribal areas. Displacement due to development came as a natural outcome of alienation and soon became the next theme of PRIA's exploration. As new knowledge was built, skill building to complement this became important part of the process. From 1984 onwards, community organizing around issues of natural resource management became the focus of capacity building programmes for activists in this area of work. PRIA convened a national consultation on large dams in 1985, in collaboration with XISS of Ranchi, ISI, Delhi and CSE, Delhi. A broad-based coalition of anti-dam efforts throughout the country resulted as "Assertion of Collective Will against Large Dams". In order to strengthen the capacities of the activists involved in the movement, capacity building interventions were taken up in 1986. These focused on developing strategies to prevent displacement, as well skill building and techniques of monitoring and assessing large dam projects. In order to broaden the experience and learn from others, a workshop was held in 1987 at an Asian level titled "People and Dams".

Deforestation, land ownership and Alienation: A study on the impact of the Present policy on forest dwellers in Himachal Pradesh was carried out in 1982-83 in collaboration with local groups. The focus of the study was extent and causes of deforestation, role of local forest dwellers in it, and the nature of forest contract system etc. A popular report in Hindi (*Himachal mein Van Vinash*) was prepared and published for wider local dissemination. Subsequently, an English report of this study (*Deforestation in Himachal Pradesh*) was published. In the course of this involvement, the problem of land ownership and alienation as a major concern in rural areas was highlighted and discussed in one of the workshops organized by PRIA. Consequently, several local studies were initiated and case studies were prepared. A manual for the activists on this theme was also prepared and published both in English and Hindi.

The problem of land ownership caused by big dams was highlighted in a national workshop in 1985, organized in collaboration with three other institutions. The workshop particularly focused on Koel-karo hydroelectric dam in Bihar. A popular report was published in Hindi. (*Bandhon Se Bandhe Sawal*) In order to involve a large number of local groups and to focus on distinctive regional issues several regional and sub-regional workshops were organized in collaboration with local groups in Orissa, Karnataka, U.P, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These local groups were also assisted to conduct their local studies on the issues related to the broader theme of land ownership and alienation. Such as, the process and impact of redistribution of land, displacement due to dams and other projects, problem of encroachment and regularization, tribal and other land alienation. A manual for activists was prepared and published in regional languages such as Tamil and Telugu.

Workers Education and Occupational Health

Absence of information on the subject of occupational health to the workers motivated PRIA to intervene. The reality of deaths and countless permanent disabilities due to occupationally related accidents forced PRIA to position itself with workers' perspective.

Occupational health issues for slate workers in Mandsaur, bidi workers, construction workers and chemical and textile workers were explored in a significant way. PRIA's efforts to build an international coalition to address the issues of safety and health, both inside the industry, as well as in the community were spurred on with the Bhopal gas disaster in 1984. 'No place to run' was the result of this in collaboration with Centre for Science and Environment and Highlander Research and Education Centre, Tennessee.

Attempts to bring good practitioners of occupational health and trade unions as well as environmental health practitioners began as early as 1986-87. It culminated in series of interventions focusing on building workers support centres and citizen initiative centres in different parts of the country. Campaigns and policy advocacy work on this issue began in Gujarat around chemical estates in 1987. By end of 1980s, a national campaign on dust related lung diseases had been launched.

Subsequent policy advocacy efforts have focused on reforming the ESIC and revitalizing safety committees. This has also resulted in campaigns on the right to information for workers to learn about hazards, effluents and pollution that affect their health, their lives, their families, neighbours and the community at large.

In the initial years PRIA primarily focused on the identification of the victims and activating the remedial system. Now its three-fold strategy of empowerment includes educational intervention for mobilizing workers at grassroots level, conducting research and advocacy for policy change and creating public awareness at large.

Participatory Diagnostic Camps were organized at Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Nagpur. The strategy was to demystify diagnostic criteria and involvement of medical doctors. In these camps workers were involved in recording occupational history, symptoms, clinical examination like lung function tests. During this period PRIA procured a portable ventilomotor, which was used by the workers. The diagnostic process was developed with the help of National Institute of Occupational health, Ahmedabad. As an outcome of this intervention, suspected cases were identified for follow up with Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). Under its public awareness strategy poster competitions with school students and a national poster competition on dust related lungs diseases were organized.

Women's Income Generation and Livelihood Programme

PRIA has laid great stress on women's livelihood and income generation projects started since 1983. It began with developing a training strategy under the DWCRA programme and preparing learning material for the same. A programme on 'Women's Access and Empowerment through Economic Activities' (1986-87) led PRIA to develop ideas, in collaboration with practitioners, on women's access to credit and their involvement in wasteland development. Around the same time, it also focused on building of management skills for women organizers in order to enhance women's empowerment through livelihood and income generation programmes. PRIA, in collaboration with World Education, is currently coordinating a three-year pilot project called WELLD (Women's empowerment through literacy and livelihood development). This project aims to integrate literacy skills with livelihood enhancement and savings and credit initiatives set within an empowerment framework.

Mini social MBA: Many organizations were working with women in income generating projects. PRIA found that women were only trained in the technical skill of particular variety of income generating activity but not in the management of that activity. Activists themselves were not sufficiently capable in managing economic activity. They were struggling with complicated and complex issues such as marketing, quality maintenance and control, getting credit and maintaining accounts. They had to depend either on external expertise or struggle alone learn from experience. Training workshops were organized for the activists to enable the understanding of managerial issues in women income generating projects and programmes, skills in planning and managing women's income generating programme. Such Training workshops were called Mini Social MBA for activists. Training workshops discussed issues of credit, market, raw material procurement, form of organizing, wasteland development, and labour legislation for women workers. The training programme also demystified the concept of management. Training in basic managerial skills enabled them to pass information to women who were actually working on these activities.

Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions

In 1993, the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments created space for citizens' participation in governance via Panchayati Raj bodies and in Municipalities. Such local self-governance institutions were important steps in promoting decentralized democracy in the country. Taking full advantage of this opportunity for local self-governance, PRIA mobilized its partners to work on the development of Panchayati Raj institutions. Strengthening these institutions implied placing people at the very centre of their own development. Local governance could become the basis for building grass-root level initiatives and social movements. PRIA realized that its capacity building initiatives could be harnessed to build the capacity of newly elected representatives as well as the institutions of Gram Sabha, which could hold the elected representatives accountable for their actions

In 1995, PRIA together with the NCRSO's launched a joint action programme for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). A multi-sectoral strategic intervention was planned out through its Centre for Local Self-Governance. The objective was to enable the PRIs to function as institutions of self-governance and not as mere implementations for decisions taken elsewhere.

PRI programmes included direct interventions at grassroots level like capacity building of Panchayat leaders, promoting leadership of women and weaker sections, micro planning, and strengthening of Gram Sabhas. Gradually these expanded to include a range of inputs like research studies on Panchayats, awareness campaigns, and training to strengthen capacities of local VDOs, preparation and dissemination of educational materials and bottom up planning process.

Micro-planning interventions in Himachal Pradesh: Panchayat elections were held in Himachal Pradesh in December 1995. PRIA recognized the need to assist the elected representatives of the Panchayat in carrying out their new responsibility. An action plan was chalked out. In collaboration with its local partner NGO, RTDC, PRIA facilitated the community's involvement in the process of micro planning. The facilitators concentrated on one Panchayat (Kehar Panchayat), in the Mandi district. They undertook a nine-month micro planning intervention, with the active participation of the Panchayat members and the local community in May 96. The micro planning process included

selection of the Panchayat, environment building, along with collective data collection analysis and sharing of findings. These steps assisted the community in problem analysis and identification of development priorities, solution and strategies. Active participation of the community was ensured at each step of the process. The process oriented the gram Panchayat members about the concept of micro planning, and resulted in development of a Panchayat level plan, which reflected the problems and solutions from the perspective of community.

Capacity building interventions for elected representatives: Capacity building of elected PRI representatives followed a multi-pronged strategy. It included conducting workshops to assess capacity building needs, skill-building interventions, structured training programmes, workshops, meetings, exposure visits, camps as well as development of educational material. The primary aim of the intervention was to strengthen the understanding on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and develop strategies for its implementation. Another key area was to strengthen capacities of elected representatives and the Gram Sabha members to understand and play their stipulated roles and responsibilities. The strategy also included techniques and other means of strengthening the interface between the three tiers of PRIs. Exclusive events were organized to strengthen capacities of first time elected tribals, women and dalit members. This included organization of Mahila Sammelan in Haryana and exclusive training programmes for tribal women in Madhya Pradesh.

Pre-Election Voter Awareness Campaign (PEVAC): PRIA carried out PEVAC in Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts of Rajasthan between January 20–31, 2000. The main objective of PEVAC was to create an enabling environment for free and fair elections at the village level; enhance participation of women and weaker sections during the election process; sensitize voter's about their rights and enhance polling at the Panchayat level. The campaign was divided into three main phases, which were; campaign planning; campaign implementation and campaign assessment. The key steps in the implementation of the campaign included initiating dialogue, understanding the community and their needs, setting of goals and objectives and initiating a SWOT analysis of the campaign. Implementation methods used for the campaign included, among others, slogan writing, bicycle rally, kala jathas, puppet shows, small group meeting, posters, pamphlets and audio-visual means. Media involvement assisted in informing local people about the campaign. A simultaneous, impact assessment study of the campaign conducted by PRIA showed a significant increase in women's participation and the free and fair elections being conducted in Rajasthan.

Participation of Citizens and Community in Governance

PRIA's mission is to promote policies, institutions and capacities that strengthen the voice and participation of the poor and the marginalised and enhance democratic governance in society. Through two decades of experimentation, innovations and experiences PRIA has gained insights into mainstreaming participation of the marginalized communities. Social Development Monitoring (SDM) is one of the modes of enhancing citizen participation. SDM entails periodic observation and action by disadvantaged groups or citizens who could be project participants and or target

beneficiaries. It ensures inclusiveness or articulations for accountability, responsiveness and transparencies of implementing agencies or institutions.

Social Development Monitoring (SDM) and Citizenship: An effort for strengthening citizen's monitoring was made in Jamtara block of Santhal Pargana region in the state of Jharkhand. A project on non-formal education to working children in bidi making was selected for monitoring. The NFE schools aimed to educate such children upto class III and then mainstream them into govt run primary schools. An exploratory study of Bal Shramik Vidyalayas was made. The study helped not only to get insight into actual working of the schools but also to understand the various concerns of the stakeholders. A workshop was organized to share the findings of the study. A cross section of society and stakeholders such as govt officials, teachers, parents, academia, media civil society representatives attended it. A couple of follow-up meetings at the village level with many parents followed this workshop. During the meetings parents decided to monitor three Vidyalayas in Jamtara block. They formed a committee and decided on the indicators, modalities of monitoring and roles and responsibilities of the monitors. They decided on three indicators for monitoring:

- a. Presence or absence of two teachers during school hours.
- b. Serving of *poshahaar* (mid day meal) to children
- c. Routine health check-up of children by local health department.

The committee monitored the first two indicators 4-5 days a month and once a month in the case of health check up. The committee took determined action against the alleged acts of omission in the day-to-day running of the school. The project officials were forced to take tough measures against the erring persons. They apprised the circle officer of Jamtara of their concerns, and suggestions for the improved functioning of the school. They also put up a number of demands, which they felt had a bearing on goal of elimination of child labour. For instance, they demanded that they be provided loans against self-employment guarantee programme for small learning opportunities and be given priority under Rashtriya Parivar Labh Yojana (RPLY), Vridha Pension Yojana and Indira Awas Yojana. Such meetings helped the citizens to understand the ways government business is conducted and the skills of the negotiating with officials.

Participation, Citizenship and Governance

The perspective of PRIA and its partners to strengthen aspects of citizenship, participation and democracy has inspired many individuals and organizations working on similar issues. There was a perceived need to provide a common platform for dialogue, critical analyses and debate on the issues of participation, citizenship and governance.

PRIA and partners organized a three-day Sammelan at Bhopal in November 1999.

Bhopal Sammelan: Five themes were identified for discussion viz., self-realization of citizenship, new leadership, participatory social development, accountable self-governance and empowerment. More than 5000 participants, representing the poor, the dalits, women, NGO leaders, practitioners, VDOs, Government and the media, attended it. Sammelan fulfilled the objective of engaging individuals, organizations and institutions sharing a perspective, on a common platform. It developed strategy for strengthening citizenship and participation in democratic governance and evolved clarity on our different roles and responsibilities. This way

Sammelan enabled a process of active communication and networking among different actors involved in activating citizenship and participation.

Strengthening of Institutional Base of Voluntary Organizations

PRIA developed a long-term intervention to promote and strengthen support organization in India and South Asia with a view to build capacity of intermediary VDOs. In this context, formalization of a network of collaborating regional support organizations (NCRSOs) is PRIA's distinctive achievement. By the early 90s, PRIA had also begun to interface actively with academic institutions. Its work with Associations of Schools of Social Work and some departments of sociology has resulted in teaching of participatory research, participatory development and local governance in many institutions. This is an important factor in building the interface between practitioners and researchers in order to improve theory and strengthen practice. In the context of enhancing participation of primary stakeholders in development, PRIA recognized the need to sensitize stakeholders like government officials, staff of multilateral and bilateral agencies, students and the academia as well as the media whose contribution to grassroots participation and empowerment could prove crucial.

Participatory Evaluation: The evaluation process of *Gram Vikas*, a voluntary organization located near Behrampur, Orissa was spread over four sittings covering a period of 15 months. Each sitting was one week long. The first session in January 1983 primarily involved the core staff, with a limited involvement of field staff. During this period objectives of the evaluation were discussed, strategies were planned, and assessments were carried out. Broad future plans were also evolved for changes at the level of programmatic interventions and organization structure. Review session in September 83 used the experience of evaluation camps to assess directions and plans made by Gram Vikas. There was greater involvement of field staff at this stage. The final session was held with the entire staff of the organization, including its field level workers. Discussions covered issues related to future plans for Gram Vikas's programmatic interventions, organizational structure, roles and responsibilities and systems that needed to be institutionalised. The Participatory Evaluation exercise had the overall impact of empowering the staff of Gram Vikas in many areas. It developed a critical awareness and thinking amongst them, a more pronounced sense of solidarity and an enhanced morale and higher level of confidence. The field staff and to some extent, the community were involved in the process and felt in control over the evaluation process, as they had been involved in objective data collection, analysis and feedback.

School of social work: PRIA's association with the ASSWI had initially developed through its programme of strengthening the concept people centered development in the teaching of schools of social work. This formed the basis to incorporate participatory development and participatory research in the social work curriculum. The primary objective at this point was to promote teaching and research on issues of participation and empowerment at the grassroots. PRIA also

commissioned studies on the theme of “participation” which were undertaken by the Schools of Social Work.

As part of its collaboration since 1994, PRIA and ASSWI have also been involved in an ongoing development intervention with social work educators of India. The intervention included a series of inter-professional dialogues, at national and regional level. The objective of these dialogues was to understand and assess the implications of participatory development and participatory research in social work education and practices.

Building on the lessons learnt in their five-year collaboration, PRIA and ASSWI are initiating a new phase of intervention. The intervention aims to strengthen the concept of participation, democratic governance and citizenship, through strengthening five social work institutions as Regional Nodal Centres (RNCs). The RNCs will serve as centres of learning and ongoing research on the themes of participation, democratic governance and citizenship.

II. Gram Vikas

Gram Vikas is a rural development organisation based in Orissa. It works for the people-centered rural development. It has adopted a holistic way of addressing issues of secure livelihoods, housing, drinking and sanitation through community strengthening and contribution. In the mid-eighties, Gram Vikas moved to the adoption of a community approach in all aspects of the work. The village committee and the village funds were identified as instruments that helped community managed basic services - toilets, drinking water etc. Community solutions were designed in this manner. Individual households contributed their labour to build, while the village fund was created as guarantee for sustainability of the interaction.

Community managed basic services: A village committee of the poorest, SC/ST and women representatives decided how the Village Fund should be used. In case of sanitation, operation and maintenance of the water supply and toilets was carried out from returns on the interest accrued through investing the Village fund.

The villagers who constituted the general body of the village elected a community committee. In the eight-member committee, equal numbers of women, SC/ST groups were represented. This committee of people’s representatives was entrusted with all the funds acquired by Gram Vikas to build community infrastructure

The investment in health and sanitation by communities was an important milestone in people taking control over local development. In the first few villages, it took very long for the entire community arrives at a consensus to invest in a programme, which offered little or no economic returns. Once this was achieved, the contributions to the village fund started pouring in. Besides individual contributions, Gram Vikas assisted the peoples committee to take up projects at the community level.

The community projects were designed to meet many ends. Activities such as duck rearing, fish rearing, piggery, poultry and community fruit orchards, social forestry etc. resulted in enormous

surplus, which made up the corpus of the RHEP fund. For example, In Sarakumpa, the unused village pond now reared many varieties of fish. A village volunteer supervised the pond. Families had a source of nutritious and cheap food. Around Rs. 25,000 was earned annually and this held in the village fund and reinvested for greater returns. The interest accrued was used for operation and maintenance of the infrastructure and for any future expansion.

The experience of working together on community asset building programs was new especially in the non-tribal communities. Managing community contracts gave men and women leaders the confidence to take on larger public works. In Samiya palli village the RHEP effort had resulted in a strong team of skilled masons. After the toilets were built, the work progressed on to construction of the water tank. With the surplus funds from the fishponds, people's confidence grew by leaps and bounds. There was a ripple effect--roads, drainage's and electricity were next on the list. The committee was legally registered and they bid for a contract from the local govt.

III. Vrikshamitra

Vrikshamitra has been closely involved in local tribal communities in support of their struggles for retaining and regaining access to and control over natural resources. It is concerned with issues in empowerment and forest management in the villages in Gadchiroli district of eastern Maharashtra.

Conscientization and Organization of Tribals: Tendu leaf struggle

Vrikshamitra was working on a mission of conscientising the people about their problem in 1981. They were touring 20 villages in the District Gadchiroli on bicycles in order to come into direct contact with the people. *Mendha (Lekha)* was one of the villages selected by the team on cycle tour. *Vrikshamitra* set up in the village *Sahayog Shibirs* (discussion groups) where the whole issue was discussed and debated several times. A common platform to discuss each and every issue pertaining to the village proved a boon to them. They felt that the entire process of village meetings, discussions, questions and answers and again new questions emerging from those answers was an educational experience for them. For every problem confronting them, they used the group discussion forum.

The plucking of *Tendu* leaves is a work, which lasts for one full month every year starting first week of May. This is a guaranteed employment for the people in this region. Every year government gives the contract of plucking *Tendu* leaves to the private contractors and it also fixes the minimum wage for plucking and collecting the leaves. Until few years-back peoples' understanding was that the minimum wage paid by the contractors was more than sufficient. The discussions and debates on this issue at the village meetings set people thinking. Regular discussions led to the villagers concluding that the minimum wages provided were not enough and that they must get substantially more than that. They planned a strategy of demanding very high wages and then negotiating at a slightly lesser amount. Struggle in only one village would not be fruitful hence they decided to involve all those villages, which came under the contract of the contractors. They distributed the responsibility of informing all the villages to different persons. As every village was thinking on the similar lines, hence they could take a quick decision after receiving the message from village *Mendha (Lekha)*. An unbeatable organization of

all the villages was formed. The contractors could not break the organization. They had to agree for higher wages. The news spread up to the surrounding villagers, and all contractors in the surrounding area were compelled to pay the increased rate to the local people.

IV. Ekta Parishad

Ekta Parishad is a people's organization committed towards creating pro-people socio-political and economic structures and demystifying the existing ones. It is involved in the development and struggle to ensure the right to live with dignity for tribals and dalits in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The Government has been promoting and formulating anti-poor and anti-marginalised policies. The denial of land rights of people in particular of tribals, in the name of development has given rise to a strong opposition by local people and the activists of people's movement.

Campaign against the illegal tree felling in Bastar: Bastar is one of the largest districts in India mostly populated by tribals. Before independence, the tribals did not have a right to timber trees on the land they cultivated. But after independence they were conferred the ownership of trees (Malik Makbuja rights) standing on their private lands. The timber merchants, in connivance with the social elite, forced the illiterate tribals to hand over the timber for pittance. The tribals were unaware of the value of the timber. Ekta Parishad led the movement to fight against corruption, exploitation and injustice. They were supported by other organisations. They received a favourable boost with the support and co-operation of Mr Rajgopal Naidu, the collector of Bastar. He wrote two letters to the State Government informing about seriousness of timber scandal. Government however faced strong resistance from several politicians in the investigations. As the efforts of Ekta Parishad in mobilizing and organizing the tribals were not adequate to influence the decision-makers, the Parishad decided to approach the court of law. They filed public interest litigation in high court where they highlighted the illegalities and corruption of the state forest minister, politicians and individuals in the illegal cutting and felling of timber trees in the forest of Bastar. The court's order to conduct an enquiry was a favourable outcome for the campaign. The fight against corruption and apathy of administration and forest department towards the rights of tribals has helped the tribals in different ways. The campaign made the tribal aware of the contemporary economic importance and the related rights over forest property. The oppressed, exploited and affected got a voice and moral support with the help of people's organizations. The campaign indirectly advocated for the economic rights over conservation and utilization of forest by tribals, which has stopped illegal felling of trees in the region. Inferentially Rs 23 crores (approximately) worth forest has been saved against illegal depletion.

V. District Literacy Society, Pudukkottai (Tamil Nadu)

Pudukkottai is one of the backward districts of Tamil Nadu. In 1991 National Literacy Mission selected it for the initiation of total literacy campaign. The District literacy society was formed comprising of volunteers from villages, literacy activists and govt.

organizations. Women committees were formed to identify women's problems, needs and organize them to solve some of these on their own. It is in this context, livelihood problems of non-literate women quarry workers were identified as part of National Literacy Mission.

District Literacy Society, Pudukkottai: Transformative Training: District Literacy society arranged for special training for all the volunteers who were teaching members of these quarry groups. Resource team working on Continuing Education Project at National Institute of Adult Education, New Delhi, put the initial training curriculum together. A workshop was organized with some of the members of quarry groups, volunteers and literacy coordinators. Workshop gave women an opportunity to express their perception of the situation. They also expressed alternative solutions. Some useful information was given on critical issues such as how to get a lease, utilization of seigniorage fees. 20 literacy workers were selected not only in details and nuances of quarry work but also in the analysis and understanding of complex social and gender relations. Content of training was political, with a view to equipping the group with information and skills to sustain alternative organizational forms and fight opposition when required. These trainers carried the training programme into district and organized it as an intensive five-day workshop. A comprehensive outline for organizing and managing a society of women quarry workers as an economically a socially viable enterprise was put together. Quarry Workers' federation was organized at the district level. The federation was responsible for coordinating the activities of all groups and also taking follow-up action on common issues and problems such as taking loans, assisting in marketing, standard format for accounts maintenance etc. Federation has managed to build up supporting structures for women at work. Close relations between the resource team, literacy workers and women quarry workers build up. They also developed a sense of ownership and control over the curriculum. Participants became aware of and internalized the structural issues of inequalities. Women workers were now able to fight the contractors- representatives of structural inequalities and economy. Federation gave visibility to women quarry workers.

VI. Kamdar Swasthya Suraksha Mandal (KSSM)

Kamdar Swasthya Suraksha Mandal (KSSM) has been addressing the issue of occupational health and safety. It has been working with the textile workers in organizing them to demand for safe work place and compensation for those afflicted with occupational for the last five years.

The ESI advice Centre: KSSM initiated it in April 2000. The main objective of starting such a centre is to empower workers through awareness generation on:

- The coverage of ESIS and ESIC in case of accident, death and occupational disease,
- The legal procedures for claiming of compensation, and
- The occupational health hazards.

Though the focal target group is the affected workers, a broader canvas was needed to address the issue in a more holistic way. The activities of the ESI advice Centre are as follows: -

- Regular visits to the shop floor in order to identify the problems by interacting with the workers.
- Clarification of their queries by organizing meetings at the workplace and through the distribution of leaflets.
- Provide information on occupation related hazards.
- A newsletter 'Margdarshak' is published monthly and distributed to workers. This bears information about facilities to be provided by the ESIS and ESIC.
- Organize weekly meetings with the doctors of the OHC and conducting medical camps in the premises of the mill.
- Have intermittent discussions with officials in the ESIS and ESIC to resolve the queries of workers, and
- Provide legal advice to the workers by a legal expert once a week.

The ESI Advice Centre is functioning in a very fruitful way and till date the following has been done: -

- Visits have been made to raise awareness among workers on occupational hazards, probable contracted diseases and hazards and available facilities with the ESIS.
- Meetings have held in 6 textile mills covering about 140 mill workers.
- Medical check-up of 30 patients has been done, 18 of them were suspected case of byssinosis. These cases were referred to the Occupational Health Centre for further investigation and treatment.
- Workers frequently meet in the OHC. They were informed about facilities of ESIS. Procedure of claiming compensation was also explained to them. They were also assured that at all stages the organization would play a facilitating role.

Section III: Analysis and Conclusion

In this section we have looked at the indicators of empowerment viz. awareness, participation and control and organization to understand the ways empowerment initiatives have succeeded in empowering the marginalized. This concluding section also focuses on emerging lessons as derived from the case studies on empowerment efforts.

Common Findings and Analysis

The findings are grouped according to the common issues and are analyzed accordingly. The objective is to analyze (a) the ways local marginalized and poor people/communities were empowered and (b) the role of intervening organization in providing inputs in this process of empowerment.

I

Strategy:	Research, capacity building and advocacy
Issue	Natural resource management PRIA: Studies on Deforestation, Land Ownership and Alienation
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Control over techniques of monitoring and assessing ▪ Local people involved in collecting and analyzing data, writing reports and selecting projects.
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing of findings with the local people enhanced their awareness of issues ▪ Increased sense of collective ownership
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convening loose network of VDOs and ISI. ▪ Convening with CSE, XISS and ISI (Later a network “Assertion of collective will against large dams) ▪ Workshops ▪ Dissemination through books ▪ Awareness, campaigns, rallies, meetings, camps

Analysis: The most important empowering achievement was that the communities i.e. the forest dwellers, tribals became sensitive to the issues of land alienation, and displacement. Process of empowerment began with advocacy campaigns to protest against a discriminative policy, giving spur to research studies. The purpose was to influence the policy. New knowledge generated from the findings led to the capacity building of activists to organize the community around the issue of natural resource management, monitoring and assessing the project and policy. Both the activists and the

local community members gained control over the findings. Coalition of anti-dam efforts is indicative of collective action. Both the communities and grassroot activists could not have managed the project without the support from intervening organization, in this case, PRIA. Inputs provided were training, strategy formulation, moral support and providing pertinent information.

II

Strategy	Capacity building, advocacy and knowledge building
Issue	Workers education and Occupational health, PRIA: Participatory Diagnostic Camps, KSSM: ESI Advice centre
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers learnt to use ventilomotor • Learnt to record occupational history symptoms, clinical tests • Control over findings • Workers interact with doctors, legal experts • Regularly attend meetings at OHC. • Control over findings about facilities provided by ESIS &ESIC, legal procedures for claiming compensation • Undergo regular medical check up
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demystification of diagnostic criteria • Awareness of occupational health issues • Awareness of lung diseases • Knowledge of legal procedures for claiming compensation • Coverage of ESIS &ESIC
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matter followed up with ESIC • Campaign against dust related lung diseases. • Convened a coalition of TUs, VDOs, Doctors, Professionals, and Media etc.

Analysis: Findings reveal that workers were empowered .The processes of empowerment began with demystifying the diagnostic criteria- the knowledge of so-called professional medical experts. Control over findings by learning to use the equipment, continuous face-to-face interaction with the experts empowered workers. They now knew the rules of claiming compensation. They have become sensitive to the issue of occupational health hazards. In this case too, external intervening groups took the initiatives for worker’s empowerment. Inputs included training, moral support and providing pertinent information about workers’ rights and occupational health hazards.

III

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building, knowledge building
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Women's Capacities ▪ PRIA: Mini Social MBA ▪ District Literacy Society, Pudukkottai: Transformative training
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training in managerial skills ▪ Training in details and nuances of quarry work and other managerial skills ▪ Participation and close relations emerged between resource team, literacy workers and women quarry workers developed. Each developed a sense of ownership and control over the curriculum. ▪ Workers gained strength to stand and fight against injustice and exploitation by contractors
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demystification of the concept of quarry work and management ▪ Internalization of issues of structural inequalities.
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass information to the workers ▪ The federation women quarry workers formed which took up their issues and provided support structures.

Analysis: Capacity building initiatives for activists empowered the grassroots women- in the context of this study, poor rural women and women quarry workers. Training in managerial skills enabled the activists to build the capacities of rural workers. Sharing information on gender relationships enabled both the activists and the workers to understand the structural inequalities that perpetuate unequal gender relations in market situations. New knowledge enhanced the women workers' self-esteem. They developed the strength to confront and challenge the exploitative system. Capacity building initiatives built up the knowledge base and mobilized the women workers to get organized. Intervening organizations played a crucial role. They provided inputs in the form of training, perspective building and moral support.

IV

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building, research and advocacy
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building capacities of village community ▪ PRIA: Social development Monitoring and citizenship ▪ Gram Vikas: Community managed basic services
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in monitoring and assessing the implementing agencies • Participation in decision-making • Managing community contracts • Skill building • control over findings
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demystification of the concept of community management • Awareness of crucial issues that affect the quality of governance e.g. accountability, responsiveness and transparency of implementing

	agencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the significance of village committee and village fund for community managed basic services.
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of village committee, parents committee • Formation of RHEP fund

Analysis: Communities were empowered. Villagers formed committees and took part in decision-making, monitored the implementing agencies. Capacity building strengthened citizen's initiatives. Exploratory study of the community problems and sharing it with the community helped in the identification of the problem issues. Formation of committees led the citizens to take action seriously. In this context, one can observe inter se synergy of capacity building, knowledge building and advocacy strategies in empowering the communities. Intervening organizations played a catalytic role. They provided inputs in the form of training, perspective building and providing pertinent information.

V

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions ▪ PRIA: Micro- Planning ▪ PRIA: Capacity building of elected representatives
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about problem, analysis and identification of issues • Elected representatives learnt to prepare micro-plan • Training programmes, workshops meetings, exposure visit. • Strengthened capacities of elected representatives and Gram sabha members. • Exclusive training programmes for tribals at M.P
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness increased • Demystification of the concept of planning • Understanding of the 73rd Constitutional amendment act. • Understanding of the roles and responsibilities
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilizing and convening • Preparation of Panchayat level plan • Organization of mahila Sammelan at Haryana

Analysis: Training of elected representatives in matters of local governance, micro-planning empowered them. They were now aware of the administrative issues. They developed clarity about their roles and responsibilities. Intervening organizations catalyzed the change process. Their inputs were mainly in the form of training and perspective building.

VI

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity building
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening of Institutional base of Voluntary organizations ▪ PRIA: Participatory Evaluation: Gram Vikas ▪ (PRIA): School of social work
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of the staff including the field level workers • Control over evaluation process • Social work institutions conducted studies on participation
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical awareness • Sense of solidarity and self-confidence • Understanding of the significance of participatory development and participatory research in social work education
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Vikas restructured the organization • Regional Nodal Centres

Analysis: Strengthening of institutional base of voluntary organizations is important. Empowerment of the marginalized through intermediation is an innovative strategy. Participatory evaluation exercise strengthened the organization's base and made it more responsive to local needs. Academia, the representatives of modern professional knowledge enterprise, has remained distant from local subaltern perspective. Sensitizing them and enabling them to be engaged in participatory research from citizens' perspective is an empowering exercise. Inputs were in the form of training and information dissemination.

VII

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocacy, knowledge building
Issues:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions: PRIA: PEVAC ▪ Citizens, participation and governance: PRIA: Bhopal Sammelan ▪ Citizenship and democracy: Ekta Parishad: Campaign against the illegal tree felling in Bastar ▪ Conscientization and organization: Vrikshamitra: Tendu Leaf struggle
Participation & Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals, organizations and tribals participated and shared the platform • Tribals got a voice and support of with the help of people's organization • Control and confidence to check the illegal felling of trees. • Control over knowledge gained • Strategies developed to negotiate for higher wages.
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness about voters' rights • Aware of issues on citizen participation including women, dalit, leadership, Panchayati Raj institutions, Accountable social govt and empowerment. • Awareness of economic importance and the related rights over forest

	property. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of minimum wage and exploitative practices of contractors.
Mobilization and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilizing and convening to fight against corruption, injustice and exploitation • Formation of organization

Analysis: Advocacy initiatives built up knowledge base and prompted collective action against injustice and exploitation. Knowledge of rights made the local citizens aware of the exploitative issues. As they gained self-confidence, they organized and mobilized to fight against corruption, such as developing strategies for higher wages, and participating actively in the election. Intervening organizations helped in perspective building. Marginalized groups could articulate their needs and demands with their moral support.

Emerging Lessons

The case studies reveal that empowerment was stimulated. This is recognized by the systematic approach to empowering the grassroots such as industrial workers, women workers, and village community. Local community was able to act more assertively. They were involved in the process of research, consultation and sharing. Process of research gave them self-confidence and control in decision-making. Capacity building enhanced their knowledge base. They gained sense of ownership and control. Participatory training, Participatory evaluation and monitoring as a tool enhanced the practice dimension of citizenship. Analysis brings out certain interesting principles and patterns. These are highlighted as below:

- Empowerment cannot be planned in a top-down manner. Case studies suggest that the process of empowerment is iterative, non-linear and never complete. Through action, knowledge is created. Analysis of that knowledge leads to new forms of action. By involving people in gathering information, knowledge production itself becomes a form of mobilization. New solutions are identified, tested and the tried again. Through the cycles of action-reflection-action, the nature of action gets deepened, moving from practical problem solution to more fundamental social transformation.

- Strategies of capacity building, knowledge building and advocacy for empowering the marginalized operate in an integrated and interlinked manner. Within PRIA each programme thrust area utilizes different combination of these strategies which vary over a period of time.
- Awareness and action appear critical for building empowerment. Continuous linkage of awareness, knowledge, skill and action sustains and strengthens empowerment. Struggles of people around specific issues further contribute to their empowerment. The case studies on the tribals of Bastar, and Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, women quarry workers from Tamil Nadu clearly demonstrate that their ability to take action was based on their awareness of the issues through knowledge and learning that they received through interactions, training, and campaigns.
- Awareness of people gets enhanced in the course of their involvement in the process of research, and training. In a single effort, different sets of actors acquire different levels of awareness. Field workers of action groups and local people differ on their levels of awareness. Cases of Mini Social MBA and Women Quarry Workers, for instance, indicate that both the activists and the workers gained control in their respective ways.
- There is ownership of knowledge, reflection and learning by the marginalized groups. People investigate a given reality. They are trained on a set of issues and skills. Their reflection and evaluation of given experience and programme facilitates its continuous future use. Thereby, dependence on external expertise is drastically reduced. The case of Gram Vikas on community managed services proves this point.
- Impetus for citizen action arises from their immediate conditions. In response to those conditions people get together and take action. This action further requires reflection and learning. This is where structured opportunities of adult learning can hasten and enable the process of empowerment. Initiatives for adult learning can take several forms. Studies have shown that apart from sharing of insights and experiences, structured learning opportunities through workshops, camps, conferences are important occasions for adult learning.

- Organization building process is a collective process. People come together for collective analysis. It is this collective nexus that facilitates functions of new groups and organizations and strengthens the existing organizations.
- Analysis of the case studies has highlighted that the initial initiative came from intervening organizations. However, this control gradually shifts over a period of time in the hands of local people and groups. Federation of women quarry workers, village committees for community services, parents committee for monitoring the implementing agencies, organization of villagers for negotiating wages for collecting tendu leaf are examples where citizens have taken initiatives themselves. External facilitation only enables the inherent capacities of citizens to reach their full potential.
- Intervening organizations play a catalytic role in empowerment. Some essential pre-requisites to initiate the process of social transformation are:
 1. Organizations should be committed to the goal of empowerment
 2. They should be geared to meet the demands of the task of empowering.
 3. They should be sensitive to the citizens' perspective.
 4. They should create conditions for open sharing and collective analysis.

Towards Synthesis

What is underlying ideology? What is its relevance in social transformation? How can it help the marginalized? These are some important questions that require further reflection and analysis. Insights derived from the study provide the basis for synthesis.

Inclusive citizenship necessitates articulation of a collective citizen voice to achieve their rights as citizens. It is linked to a greater understanding of (a) one's rights and responsibilities; (b) the ways to develop awareness, individually and collectively; and (c) the means to mobilize in order to make claims. It is linked more tangibly to building up of a capacity base and to the creation of productive abilities for previously excluded groups in order to help them achieve the means to intervene more powerfully in the development process. People become the agents of social action and social change.

Inclusion and participation leads to the creation and sustenance of responsible and active citizenship.

Thus empowerment is similar to Friere's concept of Conscientization where individuals become subjects in their own lives and develop a critical consciousness- that is understanding of their circumstances and the social environment that leads to action.

Knowledge is an important source of power and control. A large number of people in our society are poor, weak, oppressed and marginalized. They lack access to strategic relationships, and resources. The views and meanings of people who control strategic relationships and resources are frequently thought of as real and regarded as unquestioned 'givens'. The powerlessness of poor and marginalised is, therefore, linked to the devaluation of their own knowledge and utilization of the centralized and elitist knowledge.

The forms and relationships of knowledge production are more important than forms and relationships of material production. Elimination of exploitation patterns at the material or infrastructural level of a society does not ensure by itself that the general system of exploitation has been destroyed or that poverty, ignorance and injustice have been overcome. It becomes necessary to eliminate also the relationship governing the production of knowledge, which tend to give ideological support to injustice, oppression. It is only in this manner that the classic axiom "knowledge is power" can be fully understood. When the oppressed class begin to have influence over the processes of knowledge generation, utilization and dissemination, they can use the power of knowledge to counter trends of oppression against them. They can take a decisive step not only towards their own liberation, but also towards that of other social classes threatened with global destruction. (Borda Orlando Fals: 1985:93-94)

The creative process of responsible and useful knowledge making requires a dialogical research oriented to the social situation in which people live. This simultaneously leads to conscientization, social research and praxis. (Borda Orlando Fals: 1985:94) Through a

process of conscientization groups are able to define, conduct and interpret their own research. They are able to take collective action on the basis of their research.

The knowledge, skills necessary for people's collective action is created with participation and control of the marginalized. They need to be involved in the production of knowledge. In order to do so, they have to learn and sharpen the tools of inquiry i.e. the methods of data collection and analysis. Range of methods are used to promote their participation in creating knowledge such as, interactions, camps, workshops, discussion, dialogue, field activities, campaigns etc. The existence of certain issues requires technical expertise such as training of managerial skills to women workers or legal aspects of claim compensation. In such a situation assistance is required in a manner that ordinary people are able to appropriate that technical knowledge. Appropriation will entail absorption and integration of this knowledge with the popular knowledge of the people. The expertise facilitates this appropriation. There are also issues on which some knowledge exists. But ordinary people do not have access to it. They may not know that it exists, therefore, are unable to use it. The ordinary people need to appropriate this knowledge too. It is here that the intervening organizations play an important role. For instance, after independence tribals of Bastar were conferred the ownership of trees (Malik Makbuja rights) standing on their private lands. They, however, did not know about the related rights over forest property. Ekta Parishad made tribals aware of their rights and the tribals were mobilized to take steps against corruption.

It is in this context that the role of participatory research becomes crucial. It works as an agent of positive change. It facilitates the recognition of popular knowledge. It also creates the possibility for the oppressed and the marginalized to value their own knowledge. The process of recognition and valuing of popular knowledge contributes to the awareness raising and empowerment. Appropriation of technical and existing knowledge further empowers them. Mobilization and organization provide the mechanism through which consolidation and validation of knowledge takes place. In this sense the distinction between theory and practice disappears. The iterative process of knowing and action, awareness and action, learning and doing exemplifies the praxis.

The intervening organizations assist in this process of recognition and validation of popular knowledge and in the integration of technical and existing knowledge with the popular knowledge.

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