CHAPTER 6

CONTENT AND PROCESS
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The study and evaluation of any training programme must take into account the content and process of the training. Accordingly the content and process of the 3-day training programme for VPPs was closely observed and monitored throughout the programme and the observations are presented hereunder.

6.1 All the necessary preliminary arrangements were made and everything was camera-ready one day prior to the commencement of the training programme.

6.2 The training programme commenced on 19-12-1997 in the New Conference Hall, GRI, as planned. On the inaugural day, between 9.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m., 25 out of the 26 trainees who had responded positively to the invitation arrived at the venue and registered themselves as trainees. The training programme began at 10.00 a.m. with prayer. The researcher welcomed everyone present and gave a brief outline of the training programme and its important objectives.

6.2.1 At 10.05 a.m, the Chief Guest inaugurated the training programme. He also conducted the first training session on the topic "Micro Level Planning in Village Panchayats: An Outline". He explained the concept of village level planning, pointed out the defects in the present centralised system of planning and explained how VPPs should prepare micro plans for their villages in close collaboration with the villagers. Then he conducted a discussion with the trainees on these points, eliciting their views and clarifying their doubts. At
the end of the discussion each trainee was given a copy of a booklet entitled *Planning in Urban and Rural Local Bodies*, authored by the trainer in the vernacular (Tamil).

6.2.2 After the coffee break, at 11.45 a.m., the second training session, titled "Environment Building and Motivating the Trainees," began. During the first one hour of the training session, the trainer explained to the trainees the methodology of the training programme and the timings and the duration of the training components. He also elicited the expectations of the trainees regarding the timings and allied matters and the training schedule was fine-tuned accordingly. Then he explained the components of the training programme and the respective roles and responsibilities of the trainers and the trainees during the course of the training programme. He also explained how village panchayat plans should be prepared collectively by the village panchayat president and the ward members, involving the gram sabha and the villagers. He further explained the formation of various subject committees for agriculture, industry, trade and business and others, ensuring the presence of knowledgeable persons as leaders of the committees.

6.2.3 Following this, the second trainer of the session conducted a discussion on the 73rd Constitutional (Amendment) Act of 1992 and on the rights and duties of the VPPs in operationalising it.

The second training session helped to prepare and motivate the trainees for the 3-day training programme by explaining its components and salient features and encouraged them to participate freely, thereby creating an informal atmosphere conducive to effective learning.
6.2.4 After lunch, the third training session on "Steps and Process of Preparing Micro Plans in Village Panchayats" began at 2.00 p.m. Aptly using the cultivation of an agricultural crop according to a plan as a model, the trainer explained the several steps in such planning so as to facilitate effective comprehension by the trainees. During the discussion that followed the lecture, the trainees shared among themselves their prior experience of such planning. Many of the trainees agreed that examining each aspect of the project before taking a final decision, as enunciated by the trainer, would help to prevent unnecessary wastage. Such frank discussion by the trainees, expressing their ideas and doubts without hesitation, ensured an effective learning situation. After the discussion demonstration video films on Mushroom Cultivation and Bee Keeping were shown to the trainees. Then, using the video films as reference, the various steps in project planning and the correct method of examining and deciding upon each aspect of a project were discussed.

6.2.5 After a break for tea, the fourth training session on "Project Identification and Selection" began at 3.45 p.m. The trainer of the session provided apt examples. During the discussion that followed, many trainees, particularly women, pointed out the practical difficulties in selecting projects in consultation with the villagers and their unavoidable predicament of having to take up some non-viable projects for execution and obtained clarifications on these problems.

Some trainees voluntarily answered some of the doubts raised by their fellow-trainees during this discussion and expressed their opinions on how to face such unavoidable predicaments as pointed out by some trainees.
6.2.6 After the discussion, the president of Mettupntti village panchayat summed up the contents of the 4 sessions of the day. He thanked the 4 trainers of the day for having trained them with earnestness and in a manner easily comprehensible to the trainees. The first day's training ended at 5.30 p.m.

6.2.7 Six male trainees who were suffering from a contagious ophthalmic infection (acquired viral congestive vista, popularly known as Madras eye) were advised by their fellow-trainees to withdraw from the training programme lest the disease spread to the other trainees. So, the six left at the end of the first day's training. Therefore, only 19 VPI's participated fully in the 3-day training programme.

6.2.8 On the second day, only 15 trainees turned up at 10 a.m. So, instead of starting the training as scheduled, demonstration video films on making Mangalore-Roof Tiles and Hollow Blocks were shown to the trainees. The remaining 4 trainees arrived by 10.20 a.m. When the video show ended at 10.30 a.m., the fifth training session on "Setting Goals and Objectives" began. Since this was the first lecture of the day and since the subject matter of the lecture was rather unfamiliar, the trainees did not participate much in the discussion that followed the lecture. So this session ended in about an hour.

6.2.9 After a break for coffee, the sixth training session on "Technical and Economic Analysis" began at 11.45 a.m. Citing the demonstration video films on Mushroom Cultivation and making Hollow Blocks as examples, the trainer explained in an easily comprehensible manner how to determine the
technical and economic aspects of projects. In the discussion that followed, the trainees shared their experiences. Some trainees expressed their doubts and obtained clarifications. This session lasted up to 1.15 p.m.

6.2.10 After lunch, demonstration video films on making Battery Cells and Solar Lamps were shown. After the video show, the seventh training session on "Preparation of Work Plan" began at 2.30 p.m. Citing the universally known project of building a house as example, the trainer explained and wrote down on the blackboard the important activities involved in such a project and the time required for each of these activities. He also presented the activities in a network diagram. In the discussion that followed, some of the trainees stated that the ideas taught in this session were entirely new to them, but added that they would be very useful. Since the trainees did not have much prior experience in this line, the discussion was limited. This session ended at 3.45 p.m.

6.2.11 During the tea break that followed the session, a demonstration video film on making Coir Rope was shown. After tea, the eighth training session on "Resource Planning" began at 4 p.m. The trainer mentioned the several resources available in villages and explained how these could be identified and exploited to start profitable projects. In the discussion that followed, some of the trainees pointed to some resources available in their localities and obtained advice on the means of preparing suitable projects based on these resources. This session ended at 5.15 p.m. At the end of this session, the president of Mattapparai village panchayat summed up the day's learning. The training for the second clay ended at 5.30 p.m.
6.2.12 On the third day, at 10.00 a.m. when all the trainees arrived, in accordance with the wishes of the trainees, demonstration video films on Basket Making, Mat Weaving and Gem Polishing were shown.

6.2.13 After a break for coffee, the ninth training session on "Financial Planning" began at 11 a.m. In the beginning of his session, the trainees were given reading material on the various sources of funds for panchayats and these were further explained by the trainer. Later the trainer worked out on the blackboard the financial needs of a project and showed how to prepare a budget. All the trainees participated avidly in the discussion that followed this lecture. The session ended at 12.30 p.m.

6.2.14 After lunch, the tenth training session on "Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation" began at 1.30 p.m. The trainees stated that government officials had already told them a good deal about this subject and that they had also learnt a lot about it from government circulars. So, instead of the usual discussion following the lecture, the trainees sought information on voluntary organisations. In deference to their wishes, the trainer spoke to them about voluntary organisations. He also answered several questions raised by the trainees during the discussion that followed.

6.2.15 After a break for tea, the eleventh training session on the complementary topics, "Final Appraisal" and "Triangular Method of Plan Appraisal" began at 3.15 p.m. The trainer clarified the doubts raised by several trainees. This session ended in about an hour, without much discussion.
6.2.16 The twelfth training session on "Preparing the Draft Panchayat Plan" began at 4.15 p.m. The trainer explained to the trainees the content and format for presenting the draft plan, the simple forms and tables related to it, and, how to prepare these. In the discussion that followed, the doubts of the trainees were clarified. This session ended at 5.15 p.m. bringing to a close all the 12 training sessions as planned.

6.2.17 After a break of 15 minutes, at 5.30 p.m., the valedictory session began with a review and evaluation of the training programme. Many trainees voluntarily reviewed the 3-day training programme.

6.2.18 Later the trainees made an SWOT analysis of the possibility of formulating and executing micro level plans in their backliome situation and the points made by them were recorded on the blackboard.

6.2.19 Then an end evaluation schedule was administered in the vernacular (Tamil) to elicit the trainees' assessment of the 3-day training programme.

6.2.20 Finally, the president of the Village Panchayat Presidents' Federation of Nilakottai Block thanked the trainers and the researcher for having organised and conducted the training programme. The researcher then thanked all the trainees who participated in the training programme, all the trainers, the coordinator of the 3-day training programme, the three observers, and all those who helped in organising and conducting the training programme. The 3-day training programme came to a gratifying close at 6.45 p.m. Figure 14, spread over 2 pages and consisting of reproductions of 16 still photographs, records important events and the sessions of the 3-day training programme.
FIGURE 14
Highlights of Training Programme for VPPs

WELCOME
INAUGURATION

FIRST SESSION
SECOND SESSION

THIRD SESSION
FOURTH SESSION

FIFTH SESSION
SIXTH SESSION
6.3 In this training programme, the factors which generally determine a favourable training climate, viz., trainees, trainers, training content, training method and the physical facilities were all well organised and ensured a congenial training climate.

6.3.1 The venue of the training programme, the New Conference Hall of GRJ, was well-lit, spacious, airy and located in a pleasant calm, easily accessible and central part of the campus. All the required instructional aids like blockboard, electricity, TV, VCP, OHP, and tape-recorder were kept ready at the training venue. Comfortable seats were arranged in a semi-circle in the training hall for seating the trainees.

6.3.2 During the course of the training all the trainees listened attentively to the lectures and made notes of the important points. They participated eagerly in the discussions, shared their experiences freely and never hesitated to raise doubts or ask for explanations. They displayed a high degree of involvement in the training programme, sociable interaction, cooperation, adjustability and team spirit. There was absolutely no sign of negative behaviour like excessive shyness, loss of temper, leaving the training hall during the course of the training sessions, suspicion, dysfunctional behaviour, group deviation, domination or criticising others.

Points of trainee behaviour which deserved special notice were summing up the proceedings of the day, coming forward to answer questions raised by follow trainees, and, voluntarily taking charge of serving coffee, tea and lunch.

Generally the trainees reported for training on time. They participated in the training with unflagging interest to the last minute each day. No trainee ever left the training venue for home before the closing time on any day.
All the trainees spoke clearly and calmly in a manner that was easily comprehensible to all the others. All the trainees conducted themselves with remarkable good manners with the trainers, the organisers and their fellow-trainees.

6.3.3 All the trainers came to the training hall and began their sessions on time. Some of the trainers turned up early and participated in the discussion of the session prior to their own. Each trainer presented the subject content in simple style, with apt illustrations to facilitate easy comprehension. The trainers listened patiently to the doubts raised by the trainees and clarified them satisfactorily. They generally avoided English words and used colloquial vernacular (Tamil) speech. During the discussions, the trainers acted as moderators and facilitated the sharing of the trainees' ideas and experiences. Generally the trainers perceived the level of understanding of the trainees and tailored the training accordingly. The distribution of reference handouts by two of the trainers pleased the trainees much. The trainees appreciated very much the fact that some of the trainers used the demonstration video films exhibited as reference. The trainees also appreciated the adjusting of the timings and the subjects in deference to their wishes. Generally the trainers kept their sessions within the time limit specified in the tentative training plan.

6.3.4 Lectures, discussion, sharing of views and experience by trainees, and, question-and-answer sessions were the training methods adopted. These methods were reinforced by printed topic synopsis in the vernacular (Tamil) distributed, at the beginning of each session and also made available as OHP display as and when needed. The blackboard was frequently used by the trainers. Some trainers used instant OHP transparencies also.
6.3.5 As and when tune became available, ten demonstration video films dealing with development projects relevant to village panchayats were shown to the trainees. Each of these films lasted 10 to 15 minutes. These films were of use not only to the trainees, but also to the trainers, who cited them to illustrate their ideas. Moreover, these video shows helped to provide relaxation to the trainees as well as the trainers between training sessions. They also helped to fill time gaps caused by limited participation by trainees in the discussion following some of the lectures.

6.3.6 The twelve topics of training covering the subject of MLP were selected with an eye on the felt needs of the trainees and after referring to several books on the subject and consulting several experts. Each topic and its subdivisions were so designed as to last 45 to 60 minutes in terms of delivery.

During the discussions, the trainees stated that 4 of the topics, viz., Setting Goals and Objectives", "Technical and Economic Analysis", "Work Plan i Preparation", and, "Final Appraisal" were rather new to them. So the discussions following the lectures on these topics were rather limited. The trainees were familiar with 3 of the topics, viz., "Project Identification and Selection", "Resource Planning", and, "Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation". So, in the discussions that followed the lectures on these topics, the trainees voluntarily supplemented the ideas presented by the trainers and also answered some of the questions raised by fellow-trainees. The discussion following the lecture on "Financial Planning" was the most lively and prolonged, possibly because of the trainees'keen interest in learning the subject thoroughly. The discussions following the lectures on the remaining 4 topics were only moderate. In the discussion following the
lecture on "Work Plan Preparation", most of the trainees stated that network diagraming of activities was far beyond their comprehension and requested that it be dropped from the training content.

6.3.7 All the trainees unanimously stated that the Triangular Plan Appraisal method would help to remove the currently prevalent undue delays and expedite the final approval and the implementation of projects, thereby ensuring the goodwill and the cooperation of the villagers.

3.3.8 The 30-minute mini-session on voluntary organisations, conducted in deference to the request of the trainees in the afternoon of the third day of the training programme, was an unplanned addition.

6.3.9 The entire training was closely monitored to check whether it proceeded according to the original plan. Each lecture was recorded on audio-cassettes and replayed after the session to check if any ideas or points had been omitted. It was found that the subject contents were disseminated to the trainees as planned.

The summing up of each of the first two days’ proceedings and the review of the entire training programme at the end of the third day by the trainees helped to monitor and evaluate the training sessions.

All the important events of the training programme were photographically recorded and this also helped to some extent to monitor the training programme.
At the very beginning of the training programme the trainees were advised that, if they did not understand any point, they were welcome to appraise the coordinator of the same. The trainees were also advised that, if they experienced any inconvenience, they should feel free to appraise the organisers of the same. However, none of the trainees ever appraised the coordinator of any instance of incomprehension or the organisers of any instance of inconvenience. This was a clear indication of the sufficiency of the content and process of the training programme and the adequacy of the facilities provided.

6.3.10 In order to assess the impact of the training programme an end evaluation schedule was administered to the trainees at the close of the training programme.

To cross-check these assessments, the researcher utilised the services of three students of the two-year master’s programme in Rural Project Management offered by GRI as observers of the content and process of the training programme.

6.3.11 On the first day the training programme started at 9.00 a.m. and ended at 5.30 p.m, on the second day it started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 5.30 p.m, and, on the third day it started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 6.45 p.m. Table 68 presents the actual time taken for the various activities of the training programme.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time in minutes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lecture-cum discussion</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Video Film</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Summarising</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Valedictory Session</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lunch and Co Hoc/Tea</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1460</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.12 A total sum of around Rs. 36000/= (Rupees thirty six thousand) was spent on the 3-day training programme. This expenditure covers pre-training exercises, food and refreshments, preparing the training material, preparing reading material for distribution, and, contingent expenses. It does not cover the expenditure on the venue, the audio visual equipment, and the services of the trainees the technicians and the helpers which were all provided free of cost by GRII. It does not also include T.A., D.A., or stipend for the trainees, who all participated in the training programme at their own cost.

The manpower utilised for the training programme consisted of one trainers coordinator, two technicians, five helpers and the researcher, who all served full-time throughout the 3-day training programme, besides the trainers also conducted the training sessions.