ABSTRACT

The developing countries like India have realized that improving the conditions of her children is the most effective strategy for developing and building her human resources. The Indian Government introduced Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program in 1974. The most significant feature of the scheme is to improve the capabilities of the parents to take care of their children and thus, involve the community by encouraging self-help in improving the quality of life of the child and the family.

But the status of community participation was found to be far below the desired levels. There is obviously a tremendous scope of enhancing the extent of community participation. The Participatory Learning and Management (PLM) techniques facilitate the village people to assess, analyze their problems related to Health and Nutrition and identify their potentialities for solving their problems by themselves to whatever extent possible.

All the Community Nutrition Instructors (CNIs) and Community Nutrition Supervisors (CNSs) in Tamil Nadu were given training on PLM techniques in three institutions namely, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health & Family Welfare Trust and State Institute of Rural Development. The problems connected with socio-economic development programs are multi-dimensional and hence, for a meaningful evaluation, an in-depth probing and analysis of the factors for successful implementation, an impact study becomes essential.

In chapter II, related relevant literature has been reviewed. But no study has been reported on the evaluation of PLM training program given in WB-ICDS program. The available studies have not taken into account the important aspects like the block level functionaries’ knowledge, attitude, problems, and their suggestions for the effective and successful implementation of this program. Moreover, the PLM training in WB/ICDS
program was given more than a year ago. Still, no follow-up study has been conducted to assess its impact on the field level and block level functionaries and to analyze the problems they come across in the implementation process.

In Chapter III, the origin and stages of growth of ICDS, WB/ICDS programs and PRA approach were discussed in depth.

Chapter IV deals with the research design of the present research work. The present research study was envisaged with the following objectives: to assess the retention of knowledge among CNIs and CNSs on PLM techniques; to find out the extent of practice of PLM techniques by trained CNIs and CNSs in their actual work setting; to find out the factors contributing to the ability of trained CNIs and CNSs in applying the PLM techniques; to identify the constraints in the application of PLM techniques in the field; and to make suitable suggestions and corrective measures for the effective application of PLM techniques in WB/ICDS program by the trained CNIs and CNSs.

For the present study, the researcher has made an attempt to understand the impact of the PLM Training in WB/ICDS programme given by Gandhigram Rural Institute among the 323 trained block level supervisors in which this researcher was involved as a member of the training team.

The primary data has been collected from CNIs and CNSs by using a structured and pre-tested personal interview schedule using personal interview technique and observation.

In chapter V, the background and socio-economic characteristics of the block level supervisors were discussed along with the usefulness of training methods and materials used in the PLM training programme.

In chapter VI, the block level supervisors’ knowledge of and attitude towards PLM techniques are presented. The block level
supervisors found to have sound and high level knowledge on PLM techniques like social mapping, wealth ranking, Venn diagram, preference ranking and time line. Their knowledge level was found to be medium in the case of problem prioritization technique and below average in the case of seasonal calendar and trend change techniques. Their background and socio-economic variables were found to predict their knowledge of and attitude towards PLM techniques both directly and indirectly. More than 80 per cent of the block level supervisors had positive and favourable attitude towards PLM Techniques in terms of establishing rapport with people, entry point to the community, requires less cost, enhance people’s participation and so on. Their attitude was found to be negative and unfavourable in terms of time consumption, i.e., they thought that PLM Techniques are time consuming due to the fact that they failed to compare the time taken for the same task by the conventional methods.

In chapter VII, practice of the PLM techniques in the field by the block level supervisors is discussed. Social mapping technique was the most practiced PLM Technique both among the CNIs and the CNSs, followed by problem prioritization and wealth ranking. Some of the least practiced PLM Techniques in the field were decision matrix, preference ranking and trend change technique. Their background and socio-economic variables affected the practice of PLM techniques in the field by the block level supervisors.

In chapter VIII, the researcher’s observations on the practice of selected five PLM techniques in the actual field setting by the block level supervisors were presented. The overall observation of the researcher was that the block level supervisors practiced PLM techniques in the field with good understanding and clarity.

In chapter IX, the major findings, summary of conclusion and recommendations were presented.