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# CONCEPT PAPER ON MICRO PLANNING

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## (1) Background :

*Universalisation of primary education is one of the most important National goal of development. In order to meet its commitment to achieve Education For All (EFA) by the Year 2000, the Govt of India, launched many national programmes like Non-Formal Education (NFE), Operation Black Board (OBB), Mid-day meal scheme etc. But still a large number (almost half) of Children aged between 6 and 11 years remain outside the school and the absolute number of illiterate people rose substantially in last 50 years. Figures on attendance, retention, learning achievement of students, overall development of children also do not show any encouraging picture. It clearly shows that National level macro policy which is uniformly implemented in the whole country with great diversity, cannot meet the local requirements and hence cannot achieve complete success.*

*Problems of the people in general, and status of education in particular are local, complex, diverse and dynamic. The Professionals study the problems, process and analyze the data at macro level and then come up with solutions which are then implemented across the whole country. Such macropolicies tend to reduce the complex and diverse problems to simple and standard ones. Naturally, such macropolicies, which are simplified and standardised can not meet and solve the local problems which are diverse, complex and varying in nature. A single prescription for educational development, from the top cannot really address all the complex problems of the districts, talukas, habitations. So, what is needed is the reversal of the planning process. Planning should not be done from the top, but from the bottom, it should not be done by the professionals but by the people in their local context. All existing top-down standardized programmes for education need to be modified for local fit and reformulated in a participatory mode.*

## (2) Microplanning :

*Enrollment, attendance, retention, achievement of students vary a great deal from locality to locality and these are greatly affected by local socio-economic conditions, values, attitudes and other local factors. Depending on the barriers and constraints, microplans should be prepared by the community, using participatory techniques. Participatory Learning & Action*

*(PLA) seeks to enable the local people to appraise, analyze and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions; identify barriers; plan solutions; act to achieve their goals; monitor and evaluate. With particular reference to education, the local people are empowered to appraise, and analyze the existing status of enrollment, attendance, retention, achievement, infrastructure, then identify the problems, suggest local solutions and act. To be more specific, the local people can appraise and analyze the following :*

- *Girls and boys in age group 6-14 years.*
- *Girls and boys attending school.*
- *Girls and boys not attending school.*
- *Sick Children.*
- *Working Children.*
- *Girls and boys in age group 0-6 years.*
- *Malnourished girls and boys.*
- *Attendance of girls & boys; seasonal variation.*
- *Drop-outs after Std. IV of girls & boys.*
- *Level of learning of girls & boys; etc.*

*The reasons for non-enrollment, non-attendance, non-achievement of minimum levels of learning by students, etc. could be different for different localities, which should be identified by the local people. The barriers could be anything like :*

- *No autonomy to teachers and students.*
- *Insensitive parents.*
- *Social taboos against girls' education.*
- *Poor economic condition (working children).*
- *Fear of teacher.*
- *Absence of teacher.*
- *Boring methods of teaching.*
- *Poor health, poor nourishment.*
- *Poor methods of teaching-learning, evaluation.*
- *Poor curriculum design etc.*

*After identifying the barriers the local people should be enabled to plan Local strategies for removal of those barriers. The solutions again, are locality specific, which could be anything like :*

- *Generating awareness amongst parents.*
- *Removing gender bias.*
- *Alternative schools for working children.*
- *Child centred activity based teaching.*
- *Learning in groups through games.*
- *Autonomy to teachers and students.*
- *Health camps for children.*
- *Early childhood centres.*
- *More attractive school environment.*
- *Community volunteers for teaching etc.*

*In this manner, the microplans at the lowest level are prepared by the local people. The action plans of the villages (localities) are then compiled to prepare cluster-level plans. Cluster-level plans are compiled to prepare block-level plans which again are compiled to get the district plan of action. The monitoring is also done by the community in regular monthly meetings.*

### **(3) Strategy of Microplanning :**

*Community Education Plans are prepared by the community, particularly the Education Committees which are selected by the community. All the school teachers, anganwadi worker, and the health worker of the locality are brought together in a School Team. This School Team led by the team leader facilitate, encourage and enable local people, specially the Education committee to express their own realities and prepare their Action Plan. The Team leaders are given training and orientation at the Block Resource Centres, by a team of 2-3 Resource persons, in participatory approaches and methods of learning and planning. The training focuses mainly on :*

- (i) Behavioural & Attitudinal Change :** *The professionally qualified teachers with their training and expertise, refuse to accept that the local people have great capabilities for appraisal, analysis and planning. They tend to have a false feeling of superiority and dominance, and have no knowledge about the capabilities of the community. Their attitude towards the people is : WE KNOW; THEY DON'T KNOW. Sweeping behavioural and attitudinal change is required to be a true facilitator of the community for enabling it to express and share knowledge. One must be ready to discard his/her professional beliefs, and must have open mind to learn things from the people. The most important shift in the behaviour is to start from the premiss : WE DON'T*

**KNOW; THEY KNOW.** *The teachers are trained to change their behaviour, from dominating professionals to patient listeners and learners. They are trained to be courteous, respectful, generous, sensitive and very nice to local people. They are oriented to promote a habit of sharing with the community. They share food, living, experiences, fun, information, knowledge and also learn together with the community. They hand over the stick of control to local people, sit down, listen, ask people, learn together.*

(ii) Methods : *In using various methods, the shift is from :*

- *Pre-set to participatory and open.*
- *Measuring to comparing.*
- *Individual to group participation.*
- *Verbal interview to visual method.*
- *Paper to ground as medium.*
- *Reserve to rapport with people.*

*People can learn through PLA, expressing and sharing what they know but earlier had not expressed and shared. They use methods like modelling, mapping, sequences, seasonality analysis, matrix scoring, trend analysis etc, which the local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. Mapping and other diagrams are drawn on open ground using local material, by the local people in groups. Such open methods as compared with closed methods like questionnaires, allow a larger participation of people; sharing of knowledge, analysis and also shifts the ownership to the people. Formats, questionnaires which do not allow any flexibility reinforces professional dominance and needs to be discarded.*

(4) Village mapping :

(a) Community and facilities mapping :

*The trained and oriented school team now starts training the local people in using various methods to analyse their present educational status, identify barriers, suggest solutions and take planned actions. On a fixed day, at a commonly agreed time, the team members alongwith the education committee members, walk through the roads, and lanes of the locality and gather men, women and children on a open space. The open space should be as big as possible for having a bigger map and accomodating a*

large gathering for better sharing. Then rapport building starts with introduction, some preliminary discussion and some local game ensuring participation by all. The team members try to ensure presence of all cross sections of the locality. One of them also try to draw any influential dominant person out of the group by requesting a seperate discussion. Then the local people are facilitated to draw the map on the ground, step by step as following :

- All the roads & lanes are laid.
- All community facilities like temples, churches, mosque, School, open well, borewell, electric pole, etc. are shown.
- All individual families (households) are indicated as squares.
- Different colours are used for indicating SC, ST, Others.
- Female & male members in every family are shown by different seeds.
- Literate/illiterate persons may be coloured.

This community map may now be analysed and we can learn the following :

- Total population, Female to male ratio.
- Total households.
- Proportion of SC/ST to total population.
- Literacy level of the community etc.

Then the local people are facilitated to discuss various issues relating to education of their children, the school, the status of education etc.. Since, the learning and planning has to be in participatory mode, and as perceived by the local people, the facilitators should not have any preset agenda. Even then, the community may be facilitated on the following processes.

(b) Educational Status mapping :

After basic discussion with the community on education of children, the agenda, and priorities of the local people are ascertained. In the community map as drawn above, all members including children are shown in every household. Then seeds representing all members, except boys and girls in the school-going age (6-14 years), are removed. The total of all the remaining seeds will indicate the total number of girls

and boys in the school-going age. Then the boys and girls who are attending school is kept outside the squares, which is then added up to indicate the number of boys and girls going to schools. The number of boys and girls remaining in the houses are added up to indicate those who are not attending the school. Depending on local situations, the local peoples' perceptions, the causes of non attendance of these children are discussed. For getting more insights these could again be broken up into two categories : the children who were never enrolled and the children who dropped out. These could be easily done on the ground by making two compartments in every square and dividing the remaining seeds in these two compartments. Again the whole age group could be broken up into two : 6-8 years and 9-14 years. The boys and girls in the age group 6-8 years can be got enrolled very easily. But the drop-outs in the age group 9-14 years are the most difficult to bring back to the school. The reasons are discussed with the community and the action plan is drawn up to bring them back to school.

(c) Gender sensitisation :

The attendance, enrollment, drop outs etc can be analysed in a matrix for boys and girls for bringing out gender bias if any, existing in the community. The workload of men and women also may be analysed in general, over the months in a year to highlight gender bias and learn the realities, and improve the situation.

(d) Working Children :

The working children if any, may be mapped on the basic village map by representing them by seeds in the households. Then, if necessary, the livelihood analysis of those specific families may be conducted for improving their family income so that the children can be weaned away from works. Alternative schools can also be planned by doing daily routine analysis of the children and finding out the suitable time for schooling.

(e) Children Health Status : After indicating the children in the age group 6-14 years in every household on the map, the seeds indicating sick children can be kept outside the households. From the exercise, the community can find out the number of sick children in the village, can get their health checked up and also take up some initiative for their treatment.

(f) Nutrition : Again, children in the age group 0-6 years, may be indicated in every square on the map on ground by seeds. Then malnourished children if any, are kept outside the squares; and added up to indicate the total number of malnourished children in the locality. The causes are discussed, shared and actions are planned for their nourishment.

(5) School mapping :

The facilitators start with general discussion on the school, their views on the performance of the school, on the performance indicators of the school etc. The school rooms and environment and facilities including drinking water facilities, toilets, gardens, etc are drawn on the ground. Enrollment, attendance, retention, achievement levels of children, the number of teachers, rooms, methodology of teaching etc. are discussed and shared, and the problems are identified. Once the present situation is appraised and analysed, planned action is taken to improve the situation. Trend analysis is conducted to learn how the above figures have been changing over last 3 to 5 years and the causes there of. Seasonal dimensions of school performance are learnt through seasonality analysis of attendance, achievement etc. and actions are planned to improve the situation.

All the appraisals and analyses are copied on chart sheets and displayed in the school for sharing. The plan of actions are implemented jointly by the school team and the community in a partnership mode of working. The implementation is monitored and evaluated by the community at regular intervals. The community and the school team also learn while implementing the plan of action and gain confidence through doing.

(6) Microplanning in Chandrapur :

In Chandrapur district there are 12 blocks, 133 clusters, about 1400 villages and 200 hamlets and 6 municipalities. In all there are 1756 primary Schools; Microplanning exercise



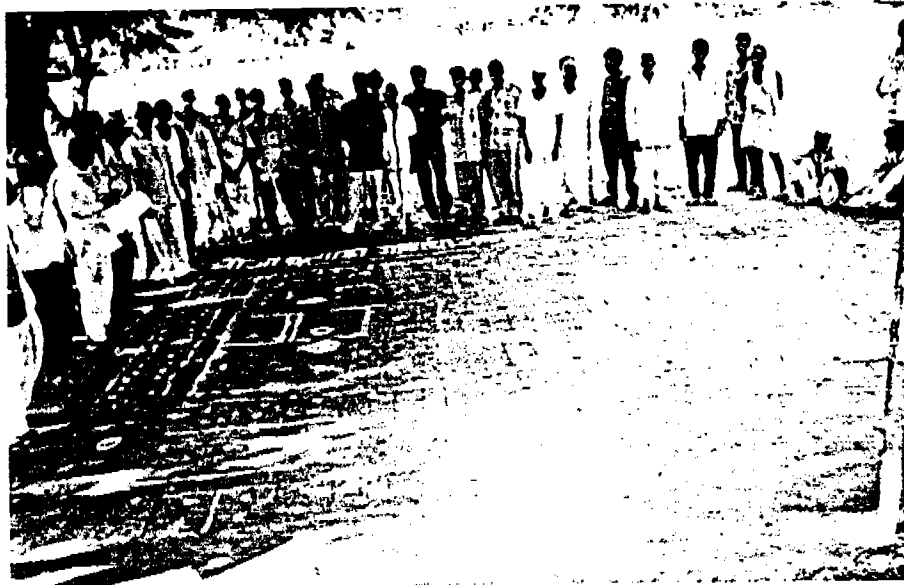
was undertaken in all villages and hamlets during May, June and July, 1997. The cluster heads and the school team leaders were trained and oriented in 5 block level workshops. These facilitators went to the villages and facilitated the community to appraise, analyse and prepare plan of actions using PLA. A village map and the Plan of Action of a village is shown in the photograph below. These plans of action were compiled to form cluster level, block level and finally district level plan of action. Based on these Plans, alternative schools, early childhood care centres, etc. are being started. The village education committee members, the Gram Panchayat members, Women of Self Help Groups, Parents were involved in the process and good awareness is generated in the whole district. The brief plan of action of Chandrapur district, Maharashtra is given below.

District : CHANDRAPUR

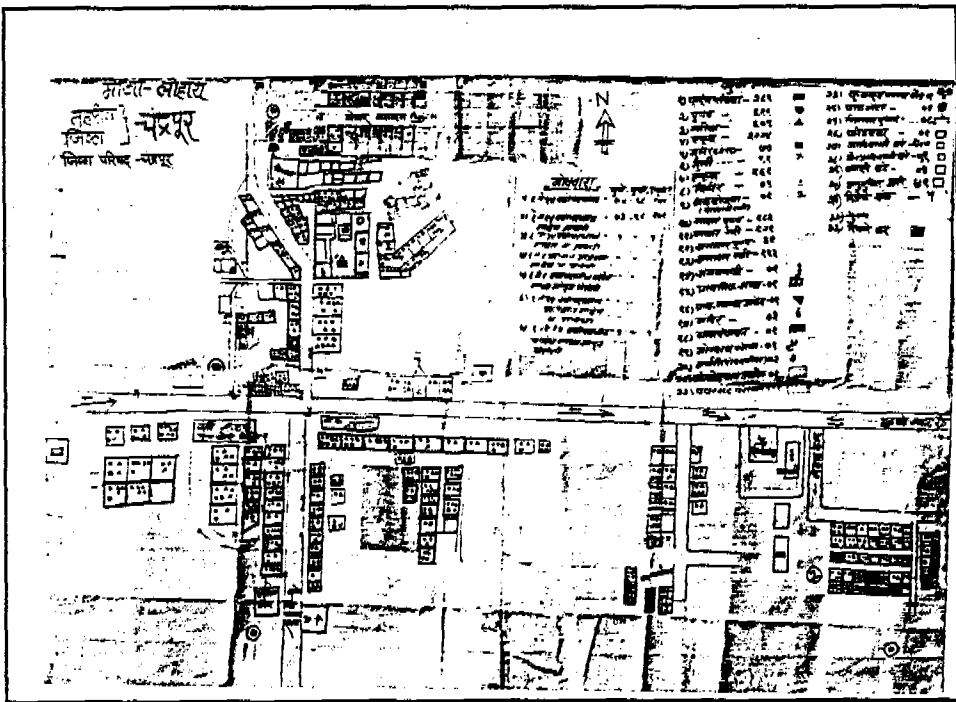
State : Maharashtra.

Total Pop.	: 17,72,000	Female	: 8,62,000	Male	: 9,10,000
Blocks	: 12,	Clusters	: 133	Pry. Schools	: 1756
Villages	: 1473 (app.)	Anganwadi	: 1296	Teachers	: 6690
VEC	: 1074	Girls (6-14 yrs)	: 1,25,617	Boys (6-14 yrs)	: 1,29,597
Alternative School planned	: 90	Girls not attending	: 2,362	Boys not attending	: 1,141





A picture showing people, drawing village map.



A typical village map transferred on paper.

Village : Lohara,

Total Pop. : 1224,

Taluka & District : Chandrapur.

Female : 605, Male : 619.

Problem

Strategy Planned

● Low attendance (87%)

● No Play ground

● No Urinals

● Head master's post is vacant.

● VEC members to persue parents.

● Daily periods for games.

● Villagers will donate land.

● Seperate urinals for boys & girls to be constructed by VEC.

● BDO is to be persued by VEC.

**A typical Community Action Plan.**

7) Constraints and strengths :

*Microplanning is a process of empowerment of the community to enable them to appraise, analyse, plan and act. It is a continuous process which requires regular PLA exercises for assessing and appraising the situations. The school teachers of the team also get engaged on a regular basis in facilitating the community in the process, which is quite a substantial job. Due to this the actual work of teaching learning may get affected. Many teachers, specially the older ones finds it very difficult to change their behaviour and attitude to become good facilitators. They require regular training and orientation which is very time consuming and expensive. Probably, such problems could be solved by identifying some young community volunteers who could be trained in PLA to become facilitators.*

*Education committees are, mostly dominated by uppers/rich of the community, also by male members. The poor and the deprived classes, often do not find place in the education committees. Consequently, the VECs mostly reflect the realities of the uppers of the communities and tend to neglect the situations, aspirations, and realities of the poor.*

*Appraisals using PLA has to be regular and continuous which demands that the people should able to devote sufficient time for various exercises. Besides Education, various other programmes like health, watersupply and sanitation, Poverty alleviation, Forestry, Watershed development, Nutrition, etc, though interlinked with each other, require seperate microplans to adopt local strategies. The time of the poor people is costly in the sense that they are always busy in their daily work and in finding sources of their livelihood. So, the natural question which arises is that who will pay for the poor peoples' time ?*

*There may not be any similarity between two microplans, because problems are locality specific and hence plans of actions will vary from locality to locality. Consequently, it is very difficult to compile the microplans to form a cluster level plan of action. Hence, it is difficult to prepare block level and district level plan of action. Since the microplans are specific to the localities, implementation and monitoring also have to be done at local level by the community. This would mean that the community should have untied fund at it's disposal for implementation. But in present set-up there is no such provision which is a great constraint in the process of decentralisation.*

*Inspite of the various constraints, the microplanning process has the strength of achieving participation from larger cross section of the community, specially the weaker sections. The microplanning process slowly transfers the ownership and management of education to the people through education committees. They prepare plan, raise fund, teach in the school when needed, monitor progress. It also helps to establish linkages between VEC's and other sectors, thus providing starting point of shifting of ownership and management of other areas of development to the people for better governance at the grass root level. So, for meeting the national commitment of providing quality education to all by 2000, the reversal must start, and must start with microplanning.*

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