Interrogating Participation in Development:
Conceptualizing and Problematizing an Experiential Account of a Community-Based Participatory Village Planning Intervention in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Submitted by

Pragya Taneja

from New Delhi, India

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Social Sciences
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>ABSA</td>
<td>Assistant Basic Shiksha Adhikari (Assistant Education Officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANM</td>
<td>Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (Block and Village level)</td>
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<td>AWC</td>
<td>Anganwadi Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWW</td>
<td>Anganwadi Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDO</td>
<td>Block Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPL</td>
<td>Below Poverty Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>Basic Shiksha Adhikari (Education Officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTF</td>
<td>Block Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief Development Officer (District level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPO</td>
<td>Child Development Project Officer (Block level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMO</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer (District level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>District Magistrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTF</td>
<td>District Level Taskforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBF</td>
<td>Exclusive Breast Feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoUP</td>
<td>Government of Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-deficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOIC</td>
<td>Medical Officer in Charge (Block level)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NREG</td>
<td>National Rural Employment Guarantee</td>
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<td>OBC</td>
<td>Other Backward Classes</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>PRI</td>
<td>Panchayati Raj Institutions</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Scheduled Castes</td>
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<td>SDF</td>
<td>Sarath Development Foundation</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribes</td>
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<td>U.P.</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNRISD</td>
<td>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development</td>
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GLOSSARY

ANM, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife: Functioning as a valued and trusted member of the community, ANM is a government functionary who is responsible for the sub-centre of a Primary Health Centre and who provides nursing, midwifery and dispensary services to villages under her jurisdiction. She surveys the villages in her area, developing a good relationship with the mothers and collecting data on births, deaths, antenatal and postnatal cases, and information relevant to a family planning program. She also has the role of health educator, discussing topics such as hygiene, diet, and family planning with the mothers. ANM is responsible for a sub-centre of a Primary Health Centre caring for about 10,000 people.¹

AWC, Anganwadi Centre: Anganwadi literally means a courtyard. It is a childcare center located within the village or the slum area itself. It is the focal point for the delivery of services at community levels to children below six years of age, pregnant women, nursing mothers and adolescent girls. Besides this, the AWC is a meeting ground where women's/mother's groups can come together, with other frontline workers, to promote awareness and joint action for child development and women's empowerment. All the services under the Government’s ICDS scheme are provided through the AWC in an integrated manner to enhance their impact on childcare. Each AWC is run by an Anganwadi Worker (AWW) supported by a helper in integrated service delivery, and improved linkages with the health system—thus increasing the capacity of community and women—especially mothers—for childcare, survival and development.²

AWW, Anganwadi Worker: The ICDS Scheme envisages the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Helpers as "honorary workers" from the local community who come forward to render their services, on part-time basis, in the area of child care and development. Anganwadi Workers & Helpers are grassroots functionaries who implement the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. They cater to the pre-school education needs of children between 3-6 years and to the health and nutrition needs of women in the age group of 15-45, children below six years and pregnant and lactating mothers. Being honorary workers, AWWs & Helpers, are paid a monthly honoraria as decided by the Government from time to time.³

Pradhan: Pradhans are the heads of elected village committees, which are responsible for undertaking development works as well as for selecting beneficiaries for various schemes of the government.

² Source: Department of Women Development & Child Welfare, Govt. of AP http://anganwadi.ap.nic.in/icds.html
**PRI: Panchayati Raj Institutions:** The term ‘Raj’ literally means governance. The *Panchayati Raj* refers to a system of governance in India which ensures decentralization of power to local self government institutions. The 73rd amendment Act (1992) provided constitutional status to the *Panchayati Raj* institutions. As per the Act, these institutions have been endowed with such powers and authority as may be necessary to function as institutions of self government and contains provisions of devolution of powers and responsibilities upon *Panchayats* at the appropriate level with reference to (a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice; and (b) the implementation of such schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them. The main features of the Act are: (i) a 3-tier system of *Panchayati Raj* for all States having population of over 20 lakh (the three tiers are *Gram Panchayat*, *Panchayat Samitis* and *Zilla Parishad* at village, block and district levels respectively); (ii) Regular *Panchayat* elections every 5 years; (iii) reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women (not less than one-third of seats); (iv) appointment of State Finance Commission to make recommendations as regards the financial powers of the *Panchayats* and (v) constitution of District Planning Committees to prepare development plans for the district as a whole.\(^4\)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend personal thanks to UNICEF, India Country Office and Sarathi Development Foundation, Lucknow for giving me an opportunity to get associated with the Village Planning Intervention in Lalitpur as part of the UNICEF-KCCI 2007 Internship programme, as well as for their kind permission to let me use, for the purpose writing this dissertation, the research material that was originally collected within the framework of the internship. My thanks are also extended to Mr. S.M. Baqar, for his supervisionary support for the internship, his wisdom, and his humor in times of adversity; to my co-interns Asha Susan Titus, Katherine Randall and Nchum Ovung for their individual insights and valuable contributions towards the entire two-month long research process and towards the report that was collectively drafted by the team for UNICEF; to the villagers of Sunaura, Sironkhurd, Jamalpur, Dashrara and Bhadauna, Lalitpur District for their hospitality and time; to Dr Rehbein for his time, words of advice and for the constant encouragement that he provided towards my ideas; to Professor Maré for taking the time to provide me with his extremely valuable feedback on the research proposal that put me in the right direction; to Professor Sitas for his time and comments that were crucial for the shaping up of the research proposal; to Professor Von Kotze for her suggestions on the literature and an extremely stimulating conversation that led me to one of her own works that proved to be fruitful for a particular section of this paper. I am indebted to authors Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock, whose paper led me to the works of Gardner and Lewis, Foucault and Laclau. And last but not the least I thank those who took time to proofread and extended their moral support in times of anxiety experienced during the process of writing this thesis. All errors of interpretation are entirely mine.
PREFACE

As part of the Global Studies Programme, the internship that I did from June-August 2007 with UNICEF India, served my interest of gaining a first hand understanding of development agencies and interventions. Most importantly, by giving me a chance to get associated with a project that drew upon a community-based participatory model of development, the traineeship gave me the opportunity to witness for real, a facet of my homeland, that until now, I had only known about from years of educational learning—formal and holistic—and the various social science and literary readers, books and films that go into the making of the knowledge of the social world that a student is supposed to acquire. Envisaging this facet had also been possible due to numerous other personal experiences that have constituted and shaped my social world. It was for the first time, however, that I came the closest possible to living it. I am referring here, to the enthralling experience of spending some time in the villages of northern India and interacting with the dwelling communities. With three other colleagues, I was involved in field work and desk research for one of the participatory Village Planning interventions undertaken by UNICEF in the Lalitpur District of the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. In this context, the assigned task of assessing the impact of the intervention and to find the areas of improvement in it took me much beyond the same to be able to gain some interesting deeper insights into the field of participatory development. It is this extremely stirring experience, as stated above, combined with a shared personal interest in the field of development studies and sociology that accounts for the inspiration behind embarking on the project of writing this Thesis. At the outset of this work, it is important to mention to the reader of the same, that as the word ‘experiential’ in the title itself would also suggest, it has been a premeditated attempt to conceive this thesis as a rather subjective retrospective analysis of my personal experiences within the framework of the internship. This element of subjectivity, in turn, explains the narrative approach that I have chosen to adopt for the purpose of writing this dissertation.

Pragya Taneja

Freiburg, 12. March 2008
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I. A Word on Method

As mentioned before, for reasons of this thesis having been born out of certain personal reflections on the experiences that followed from a traineeship, it must be mentioned that the methods that were originally employed to conduct the primary research in the context of that academic endeavor have been indispensable in writing this dissertation. This has particularly been the case for the chapter on ‘problematization’, in which the results of the primary research that were ultimately documented in the form of a case study prepared by me and my colleagues for UNICEF, have been incorporated. It is for this reason that a separate section has been included in the thesis to acknowledge the significance of the methods used in this primary research (see Annexure A and B).

Having said that, however, it must also be stated that equally important in conceptualizing this thesis has been a particular piece of literature (an article by Karen Brock and Andrea Cornwall), in which–as it would soon unfold–I found, to a great extent, the resonances of my own impressions of the aforementioned experience. Therefore, more than being a working theory for this paper, it has played a decisive role in determining, how I have arrived at both my hypothesis and results– the definition of methodology that this thesis rests on. It is for this reason of informing the rationale behind writing this thesis, that this work has been included in the next sub-section that would treat the methodological underpinnings and motivation behind the thesis under the same paradigm.

II. Methodological Underpinnings and Motivation

Participatory approaches have almost become an everyday practice in the field of development to an extent that it would not be an exaggeration to say that, in a situation where most of the development interventions require ‘Participation’ as a Prerequisite, a
Process as well as a Product, the concept, seems to me, to have acquired a certain sense of banality.

That, as I recollect, was one of the first few impressions that my brief stint with the participatory Village Planning model implemented by UNICEF in the Lalitpur District of India gave me. The opportunity of getting exposure at the grassroots level revealed to me, certain aspects about ‘participation’ per se that left me a bit perplexed. It was not quite clear to me, as to what exactly was the concept participation supposed to entail. Grappling with these few intriguing questions, made me take on the subsequent task of becoming familiar with the existing literature on participatory development and engaging with the arguments made therein. This proved to be inspiring in two ways.

By virtue of giving me an insight into the world of development, the academic training that I have had in the past couple of months, on the one hand, has put me in a position to imagine what to expect from the same and has also cultivated in me, a growing interest in the sector itself. On the other hand, however, for reasons of not having had any prior professional experience in the development sector before this internship, I was not so much conversant with the development jargon. In that sense, after this experience, the exercise of reviewing the literature firstly made it possible for me to perceive the Village Planning intervention in the light of a specific development discourse. In other words, finding in the literature, the resonances of exactly the same rhetoric that informed the intervention enabled me to identify the conceptual framework to which this particular model of development belongs. Giving an expression to this conceptual framework would therefore be one of the aims that this thesis would seek to accomplish. The idea behind doing the same is to demonstrate the motivations behind such participatory development programmes.

Secondly, reviewing the literature indeed offered me some level of confirmation and correction of my personal reflections on the experience.
At this point, I would like to briefly discuss one of the works that I found particularly fascinating and that eventually was to become the inspiration for writing this thesis. In their paper for UNRISD, research fellow with the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, Andrea Cornwall and former researcher with the participation group at same Institute, Karen Brock engage with what they call a ‘seductive mix of buzzwords’ such as ‘Empowerment’, ‘Participation’ and ‘Poverty Reduction’, which are associated with other buzzwords such as ‘Ownership’, ‘Accountability’, ‘Partnership’, ‘Transparency’ and ‘Good Governance’. Given a certain sense of purposefulness and optimism that they lend to the development policy, the writers allege that although the presence of these buzzwords in the language of the most influential development agencies may appear to represent a considerable shift in approach, they have not yet been able to permeate the terrain of development policy. In saying so, the writers call into question, the credibility of buzzwords in having led to any meaningful change in the policies pursued by mainstream development. One way to approach this, they suggest, is to ask questions about to what extent this represents real difference in practice, a task that–as the authors suggest–has been undertaken by many in the past. The other way that they mention is to look at what these words ‘as words’ do to the development Policy (Brock and Cornwall 2005: 1). Thus as they suggest:

“Paying closer attention to the ways in which particular development buzzwords have come to be used, then, sheds interesting light on the normative project that is development. [...] If words make worlds, struggles over meaning are not just about semantics: they gain a very real material dimension” (ibid: 1, 17).

This latter approach presents the essence of the argument made by Brock and Cornwall. They argue that these words that we use are never neutral. They come to be given meaning as they are put to use in policies. And these policies, in turn, influence how those who work in development come to think about what they are doing. Hence, taking a critical look at how buzzwords have come to be used in international development policy, the authors–as they state at the outset of the paper–seek to explore how different configurations of words frame and justify particular kinds of development interventions (ibid: iii). It is this second approach adopted by Brock and Cornwall that also forms the
underlying premise of this dissertation, i.e. the idea of paying attention to the way in which particular development buzzwords have come to be used.

However, before going any further, the contours of similarity between the aim and ideas of this thesis and that of the authors’ work must be righteously and precisely explained.

The authors’ stance of taking a critical look at the usage of buzzwords in development policy comes to be translated into the investigation of the forms and functions of these words in the statements of intent of development agencies. In the first part of their analysis, while situating the use of buzzwords in shifting configurations over time, the authors look at the way they have come to be used in the statements of intent of agencies such as United Nations Economic and Social Council, UNRISD, UNICEF etc, with a special focus on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Millennium Development Goals.

As against the aforementioned approach, the idea behind this thesis–the central thrust of which is the particular development model of Village Planning–is not being downright judgmental towards or being critical of either of the development agencies that are involved in its implementation. In other words, although the inspiration for writing this thesis undeniably stems from the professional assignment and experience of evaluating a programme that was implemented by UNICEF, U.P, India and its collaborative partner NGO, Sarathi Development Foundation, any attempt to perceive this analysis as an assessment of their endeavors would be misleading. Nor is this thesis an opinionated feedback meant for either of the organizations. Apart from the lack of adequate professional training to do so, the brief association with both the agencies (which was particularly more distant in case of UNICEF, Country office and UNICEF regional office in U.P) would render unfeasible any attempt to explore the realities of implementing participation in these complex and bureaucratic development organizations.

How the ideas of Brock and Cornwall (2005) have been translated in this thesis would become clear as under.
Firstly, the authors’ argument of buzzwords not being neutral must be reiterated. In other words, the way buzzwords come to be combined—as the authors contend—allows certain meanings to flourish while negating certain others.

At the same time, Brock and Cornwall also state:

“We show how words that once spoke of politics and power have come to be reconfigured in the service of today’s one-size-fits-all development recipes, spun into an apoliticized form that everyone can agree with” (Ibid: iii).

Hence, in setting the stage for a careful analysis of buzzwords and the way they have come to be used in the broader international development policy, the authors are suggestive of being wary of the present day development recipes.

It is these two arguments made by Brock and Cornwall that have been adapted within the frameworks of this thesis and inform the rationale behind writing the same. The stress on the word ‘adapted’ over here calls for a brief explanation.

This is so, because based on my observations of the Village Planning intervention, by means of this thesis—as it would unfold later on—I would try to draw the reader’s attention to three words in the discourse on participation in development, that by virtue of being deployed time and again seem to have become facile—in other words they might have acquired the status of buzzwords. These words are ‘community’, ‘facilitation/capacity building’ and ‘participation’. In doing so, my intention would be to reiterate, in the context of Village Planning, the first argument made by Brock and Cornwall: that buzzwords are never neutral and their usage allows certain meanings to flourish and others to become barely possible to think with. That is what I would be hypothesizing in this thesis. In doing so, what I would hence be doing is to undertake the task of problematizing these words within the broader discourse of participation in development. Inappropriate as well as unfeasible as it would be, given the extremely limited experience that I have had, the intention here is definitely not to undertake a task as ambitious in nature as is the one undertaken by Brock and Cornwall, whose professional training and
expertise justify the highly critical stand that they take against mainstream development, which comes across very clearly in the quote above. Building upon certain intriguing questions that an experiential encounter in this very field of development left me with, what is rather hoped to be accomplished after the subsequent exposure to the literature, (including the work by Brock and Cornwall) is to bring about a mere problematization of this encounter itself. In other words, the highly critical stance by Brock and Cornwall, therefore, has rather been adapted or reworked through/in this mental exercise of problematizing the three buzzwords.

Thus, linking the above to the point that was previously made in this very section itself, my involvement with the existing literature on participatory development offered me some level of confirmation of what I experienced. It was then that I arrived at the idea of working through my experiences in the light of the arguments made in the literature, in a bid to probe deeper into participation as a concept. Thus in addition to the first task of defining the conceptual framework for the given intervention, the second task of this thesis–with an underlying aim of bringing to the fore, the biased nature of the three buzzwords ‘community’, ‘capacity building’ and ‘participation’–lies in problematizing in the given context of this very intervention, these three words: words that are embedded in the discourse on ‘participation in development’. In this attempt to explore the realities of implementing participation within the experiential context of the intervention at the micro level, it is thus hoped that this thesis would be a means to accomplish at the macro level, the simultaneous task of interrogating or delving into the nature of ‘Participation in Development’ from a sociological lens.

To sum up, through these two tasks of problematizing and grounding the Village Planning model in a conceptual framework respectively, the underlying two-fold approach behind the thesis, therefore, is to carry out–after conducting the literature review–a theoretical or a conceptual analysis of reality in order to not only reflect on and express what was observed but also to gain a better understanding of this reality in retrospect. It is expected that both these tasks would benefit me as the producer of this
work through familiarization with the concerned literature and arguments, and a
simultaneous reflection on a personal experience.

Following this chapter that sets out the objectives behind this project, this dissertation is
henceforth divided into five different chapters. As it is premised on an experiential
account of the development intervention of Village Planning, the background,
terminologies, strategies and the vision associated with the same would be discussed in
the next chapter in order to equip the reader with the necessary means to capture the set
backdrop. Following this discussion on the vision that the intervention is based on, the
subsequent chapter would be an attempt to accomplish the first aim of this thesis– that of
situating the intervention in a definite conceptual framework. Thereafter, the theoretical
background would lay the groundwork for specifically undertaking the second more
important task of the paper: of problematizing certain aspects related to the intervention,
which, in turn, would then be taken up in the following chapter. For the purpose of
carrying out the two tasks of conceptualization and problematization, various quarterly
and annual project reports related to the Village Planning intervention would be cited and
analyzed. The last chapter would eventually synthesize the hypothesis, the theoretical
framework and the chapter on problematization in order to establish the necessary links
between the same.

Presented below is an account of the Village Planning intervention.
CHAPTER 2: VILLAGE PLANNING IN LALITPUR

The following chapter would be divided into two main sections. The first section would give a background of Lalitpur district and the Village Planning intervention itself. The second section would provide a detailed account of the project framework, its vision, strategies and the five-day Village Planning exercise. For this purpose, various quarterly and annual reports associated with the intervention have been referred to and cited.

I. Introduction

1. Background: Lalitpur

Lalitpur is situated in the south west part of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and is referred to as not only the heartland but also the heart shaped district of the Bundelkhand region. Bundelkhand is a geographic region in central India, which is divided between the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, with the larger portion lying in Madhya Pradesh. Thus, the present region of Bundelkhand comprises of numerous districts situated in the following parts of both these Indian states: namely Chitrakaut, Jhansi Division, Sagar and Gwalior divisions. Belonging to the Jhansi division, Lalitpur is an isolated border district that was carved out in 1974. As per the census of India 2001, the district, with a geographical area of 5039 square kilometers, has a population of 977,734 with a majority living in rural areas. At the administrative level, the district is divided into six development blocks namely Bar, Birdha, Jakhaura, Maharauni, Mandawra and Talbehat, out of which Talbehat is the most developed and Birdha and Mandawra are relatively backward blocks.

Agriculture forms the backbone of Lalitpur’s economy. Due to low productivity of land coupled with poor irrigation facilities and lack of modern agricultural methods, most farmers live at subsistence levels. In addition, being rich in mineral resources, a

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significant population especially from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are engaged in sandstone and granite mining and quarrying activities. The district, which was initially covered with dense deciduous forests, at present, only has 14.9 percent of its area under forest cover (WIZMIN 2006: 3). These forests have been the major source of livelihood for many forest dwelling communities, who are now known to migrate to neighboring towns and districts in search of work, in the wake of an increasing economic pressure that they face as a result of the depletion of forest cover mainly due to intensive harvesting and mining activities. Besides, in spite of its seven irrigation dams, the district suffers from acute water shortages and regular droughts. In terms of transport, the district has a poor road network and public transport. Government officials perceive Lalitpur to be a ‘punishment posting’: there is a rapid turnover of government officials at block and district levels and the district suffers from large number of vacancies for frontline government workers.

On key social development indicators, the state of Uttar Pradesh performs worse than India as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Uttar Pradesh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunization</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malnutrition</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth registration</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Comparison of key Social Development Indicators between India and U.P.

Similarly, district Lalitpur performs worse than U.P as a whole in terms of the indicators mentioned in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>Uttar Pradesh</th>
<th>Lalitpur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of babies per 1,000 born alive who die before aged one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Rate</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of mothers per 100,000 who die during childbirth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Iodization 15+ PPM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0-14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at Marriage Average age in years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive Breastfeeding Percentage of mothers practicing EBF for first 6 months</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>&lt;30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunization Percentage of children fully immunized</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe deliveries Percentage of pregnant women practicing safe deliveries</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Literacy Percentage</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literacy Percentage</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation Percentage of rural households with access to adequate sanitation facilities including toilets.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of HIV/AIDS among women Percentage</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>&lt;25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Labor Percentage of Children engaged in exploitative or hazardous labor</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Comparison of key Social Development Indicators between Lalitpur and U.P

The villages of Lalitpur are characterized by age old social hierarchies based on caste that inevitably affect local development. Following are the key people groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Caste Groups in Lalitpur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Backward Castes (OBC)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Castes (SC)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Tribes (ST)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Major Caste Groups in Lalitpur

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7 Data Source: (SDF, February 2007: slide 5).
8 Data Source: (ibid: slide 4).
Here I would briefly discuss one particular group of people called Sahariyas, as this background would be necessary for one of the key discussions in the thesis. Sahariyas are forest dwelling people that have been classified under the ST category. Their population in Lalitpur is estimated to be around 100,000. Sahariyas are considered to be one of the most poor and extremely backward people in the district. There has been a historic exploitation of Sahariyas by the landlords and employers. They don’t possess enough agricultural land to earn their livelihood, as a result of which, their main source of income comes from collecting minor forest produce. It is a common sight to see Sahariya women in town with logs of firewood on their heads ready to be sold. However, the depletion of forest cover has adversely affected their livelihood options, due to which, most of them started working as wage laborers in stone mining work. Respiratory disorders such as Silcosis and Tuberculosis are common among Sahariya men. Also, with the closure of mining activity in Lalitpur, the economic opportunities for many Sahariyas have collapsed. Therefore most of them are, at present, forced to be agricultural laborers who migrate out to the nearby districts and towns for few months each year (WIZMIN 2006: 11-12).

In terms of inhabitation, the spatial segregation in the villages is quite evident. Sahariyas live in small hutments often away from the main habitation of the village. There have been numerous cases of them being exploited at the hands of people from other backward and upper castes. Malnutrition among Sahariya children is rampant and most of them do not to go school as they accompany their parents to work. Sahariya girls can be seen carrying younger siblings and doing household work. In general, Sahariyas are considered to be indifferent to immunization, nutritional advice and standard education.

2. Background: Village Planning Intervention in Lalitpur

This section would give a brief overview of the basic information and facts associated with the intervention and would be divided into two sub-sections, which would respectively focus on the various actors involved and the different phases of the project.
Actors: Being part of a broader UNICEF, India initiative to implement integrated Village Planning in 17 key districts across the country, the Village Planning intervention in Lalitpur is a joint initiative of UNICEF and the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Although the U.P government doesn’t fund the initiative, it supports its implementation in the district. Lalitpur was chosen for the Village Planning intervention in part because UNICEF had an existing presence in the district, but also because of the numerous challenges faced by the district, as discussed above. While the UNICEF regional office in U.P has been funding the intervention from January 2005 onwards, it is being implemented by UNICEF’s partner NGO in Lalitpur called Sarathi Development Foundation. The NGO (which would be referred to as ‘Sarathi’ in the remainder of the thesis) has a team of 17 personnel based in the district, who facilitate the Village Planning process, provide the necessary follow up at the village level and work with the government officials at all levels. Within the framework of Sarathi, the project has been given the name “Bal Bandhu Convergent District Project.” With a special focus on the disadvantaged, the aim of the project as defined by Sarathi, is to create a child friendly and enabling environment in Lalitpur as well as to bring about an improvement in the overall quality of lives of both women and children, with an emphasis on nineteen key social development indicators (SDF, Annual Progress Report: 2 and SDF, First Quarterly Report: 6). Other important actors involved in the process have been discussed as under:

Village Volunteers (or Bal Bandhus—Friends of children): The Village Volunteers are the people from the village in the age group of 18-35 years. Selected for their enthusiasm, reading and writing skills, their approach towards the community and the ability to communicate, these Volunteers form the backbone of the intervention in the villages. Gender balance and representation of the various communities within the village is ensured amongst the Volunteers (with a representation of 60-65 percent from the SC and ST groups)10. The responsibility of Volunteers lies in driving forward progress in behavioral change and service delivery after the five-day Village Planning exercise. Sarathi summarizes their roles as follows:

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9 In Hindi the word ‘Bal’ means Children and the word ‘Bandhu’ means Friend, hence ‘Friends of children’.
10 As per the Project Coordinator, Sarathi
Roles of the Village Volunteers

- Assist the community to plan and implement the Village Action Plan and monitor progress
- Keep the community informed about:
  - progress of the village with reference to the Village Plan
  - information about services/schemes meant for the people
  - important events at the District/Block/Panchayat levels
  - immunization/weighing: day/dates, time and venue
  - visits to the village by the District/ Block Functionaries
- Function as a “Communication” link between the Block/Panchayat
- Offer assistance to the community based organizations such as women self help groups, youth groups, adolescent groups to realize their goals and objectives
- Assist the AWW, ANM and the school teachers in carrying out their responsibilities effectively: timely, regularly, smoothly and above all politely.
- Evolve a Village Information Centre for sharing information with the peer groups on: personal hygiene, HIV/AIDS, life skills and other relevant matters
- Take part in the village meetings and share information with the Panchayat members
- Be active and regular participants in the youth Volunteers meetings and special input trainings

Figure 2: Roles of the Village Volunteers

Initially, the Volunteers are oriented through five days in-house training about the project, Village Planning concept, Behavior Change Communication and their short term and long term role. This is then followed by their involvement in field level demonstrations, periodical meetings and interface with service providers of the government.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs): These include the various women’s self help groups and adolescent girls’ groups that are formed on the second or third day of the Village Planning process. They are created to help further behavioral change work at the family level.

Community Based Trainers: Certain Village Volunteers are selected to become Community Based Trainers, undertaking a twelve-day training course including five days in the field. They are then ready to be Volunteers in their own villages and to facilitate the Village Planning process in other villages.

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11 Data Source: (SDF, A Brief Note on Village Planning: 13).
Field Coordinators: Field coordinators are Sarathi employees responsible for facilitating the post-planning phase. In each block, there are 4-5 field coordinators, who visit each village around once every two to three months. At village level, they are responsible for meetings with Village Volunteers and CBOs, following up the action plan and liaising with frontline government workers in each village. At cluster level (at the level of a group of villages), they facilitate reflection meetings for Village Volunteers.

Phases of the Project: The Project was initiated in August 2005 and officially took off in the first week of September 2005 with the identification of Village Volunteers and their vigorous training. While the first phase lasted until December 2005, in March 2006 the intervention entered into its second phase, in which the first reassessment was carried out. After the conclusion of the second phase in July 2006, the project entered into a five-month extension period until December 2006 within which two reassessments were carried out. The extension phase focused upon finishing previous commitments, carrying out intensive follow up in villages where Village Planning had already been implemented as well as undertaking activities that would contribute towards the sustainability of the Village Planning process. By the end of the extension phase, the intervention was implemented in 376 villages across three out of the six blocks in Lalitpur, with 103 Village Planning facilitators and 1425 Village Volunteers having being trained. Thereafter, in order to integrate the model with the government systems, efforts were made to carry out Response Planning\(^\text{12}\) firstly at the cluster level, which would then converge at the block level and eventually shape up the response plan at the district level. Beginning from August 2007 onwards, although the project was initially supposed to cover the remaining 365 villages across the remaining three blocks of Lalitpur and was expected to enter phase out in December 2007, it has recently been extended until December 2009 (SDF, Annual Progress Report).

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\(^{12}\) Response planning is an exercise undertaken to consolidate Village Action Plans at the cluster level and identify common and specific issues across the cluster. The issues that need funds and responses from beyond the village are then tabulated and presented to the Block level officials for further action. Response Plans are crucial in facilitating communication with the Block and District levels, by translating the mass of village-level information into neat cluster-level tables that Block and District officials can easily digest. It is a key tool in opening dialogue with the service delivery wing.
II. Project Framework

1. Vision

In the following section, an attempt has been made to give an account of the vision that the intervention has been implemented with.

“Village Planning is an endeavour focusing on people, especially the most vulnerable: the children, the women and the disadvantaged. Fundamentally, the endeavour is a people driven approach to bring about a significant change in the quality of life particularly that of the vulnerable section through people’s participation in their own development efforts.”13

“Government is the largest agency mandated for overall development of people. Government schemes are well designed to reach the people especially socially and economically marginalized sections of the society. However, lack of community participation and ownership in such schemes along with poor inter-sector co-operation has restricted the intended impact and achievements. Experiences drawn from various interventions indicate that these schemes create sustainable impact when participatory management methodologies and approaches are made integral part to build community participation and ownership.”14

The above two statements from UNICEF and Sarathi respectively inform the approach adopted towards the implementation of the Village Planning intervention. ‘Driven by people’ and ‘community participation and ownership’ are therefore the defining elements that guide the endeavor. The project has been founded with the belief that lop-sided development methodologies and approaches have resulted in ignoring the real needs and not so visible issues of the community per se and that the development agenda on the account of having been largely pushed from top to down has merely focused on the execution of activities, thereby failing to achieve the intended result. As a result of this, the participation of the community has remained merely a token gesture and the sustainability of the impact has not been achieved. As opposed to that, Village Planning works on the premise that people have immense potentialities to plan and contribute to

their own development process. Thus, the project claims to challenge the present top-down planning process by demonstrating a much viable bottom-up planning approach, which ensures the ownership of planned intervention, thereby guaranteeing the sustainability of impact. In doing this, the project, therefore, offers an alternative approach to development which can be incorporated in the ongoing development process of the government (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 6).

2. Strategies

As defined by the Executive Director of Sarathi, Village Planning essentially entails two kinds of actions namely ‘self and community actions’ and ‘service actions’. The former are called ‘self and community actions’ because they are supposed to take forward Behavior Change Communication (BCC) by means of exploring the link between individual and family (mostly children and young people serve as a link to the family) and then between family to the community in order to bring about gradual but significant changes in the lifestyle of people. While this process of behavioral change rests upon 19 Social Development indicators across the various areas of education, health, nutrition, sanitation (see Annexure E), the five key behavioral changes that the intervention addresses are hand-washing, awareness of information about HIV AIDS, use of iodized salt, prevention of child marriage and exclusive breast feeding. The second kind of actions are ‘service actions’, which involve the external support of the government and therefore depend largely on adopting such mechanisms and processes that can shake up the delivery system per se. For instance, major service delivery issues that Village Planning tackles are: Hand-pumps installation, increase of birth registration, toilet construction, appointment of new teachers in primary schools etc. Service actions are based on the ‘demand-creation’ approach to development: an approach that forms one of the key strategies of this intervention, as discussed in the section below. The following discussion on the three features of Village Planning would further throw light on the nature of the project.
Village Planning is Demand Driven: As discussed above, addressing the issue of lack of community ownership of development interventions, the Village Planning intervention therefore aims at bringing the various sections of the community together, developing a common understanding of the problems facing the village, and planning the necessary action to be taken by the community for its own socio-economic development. The key objectives of the Village Planning process are twofold: to empower the community with the skills to identify problems facing it on an ongoing basis and to build the capacity in the village to bridge the gap between the community and the service providers to solve those problems. Such an approach fundamentally represents a ‘demand-creation approach’ to development. It rests on the sound assumption that members of the community are best able to identify the problems facing them and to make demands of those whose responsibility it is to deliver services to the community. This approach follows from a recognition that the era of the ‘supply approach’ has passed. Now is the time to empower community members to change their own behaviors and to demand and realize their rights to access the services to which they are entitled (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 12).

Village Planning is Convergent: Village Planning operates with a convergent approach in the following three ways. Firstly, by establishing accountable actors in the Village Volunteers, by involving the children in the process of knowledge dissemination, by engaging the youth in conducting household surveys, and most importantly by establishing Community Based Organizations such as women’s self help groups and adolescent girls’ groups to shoulder the responsibility of carrying forward behavior change, Village Planning seeks to foster a sense of togetherness within each of these groups. This cohesiveness of the different groups within the community translates into an attempt to bring about a convergence between them in working towards common goals (ibid: 23).

As it has also been mentioned previously, the second aspect of the convergent approach of the intervention lies in the fact that it aspires to make the Village Planning approach an integral part of government functioning in the area of rural development (SDF, First
Quarterly Report: 6). To achieve this end, the intervention attempts to involve the government at all three levels of village, block and district. Apart from working with actors such as the AWW, ANM and other government frontline workers at the village level, the project has devised two forums called Block Task Force (BTF)\(^{15}\) and District Task force (DTF)\(^{16}\), which are block and district level bodies respectively, that comprise of government functionaries from the various departments such as health, education, ICDS and development. These two bodies are charged with overseeing the Village Planning intervention and serve as a forum for raising and addressing issues that demand immediate attention. In addition, visits by block and district level functionaries to the various project sites are also facilitated.

Thirdly, Village Planning envisages a convergent approach which is expected to bring together the different sectors of health, education, nutrition, development and child protection on a common planning and implementation platform. By their very nature, behavioral change issues, such as the ones mentioned above, connect different sectors which are usually dealt with in a compartmentalized manner both by development agencies and by the government. For example, exclusive breast-feeding engages questions of child nutrition and child health (traditionally mother’s first milk is considered unclean so the child is fed with goat’s milk or water, risking infection). Similarly, prevention of child marriage engages concerns of child protection, girls’ education, household work, maternal and child health (increased risk of complications in early pregnancies). Therefore, by generating awareness regarding these issues related to behavior change and by giving the villagers an opportunity to evaluate the services related to each of these sectors and to devise solutions to all problems faced, the intervention therefore, makes an attempt for issues from all sectors to be dealt with holistically, making clear the links between them (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 24).

\(^{15}\) BTF, as mentioned above, is a body of government officials from the block Level, created as part of the overall Village Planning endeavor to specifically look into the Intervention. It comprises of the government functionaries from all departments of Development, Health, ICDS and Education i.e. BDO, ADO, MOIC, CDPOs and ABSA. The BTF holds quarterly meetings.

\(^{16}\) For the same purpose, DTF is a body of government officials from the district Level. It is chaired by the DM and comprises of Officers from the respective departments of Development, Health, ICDS and Education i.e. CDO, CMO, DMO, and BSA. DTF is supposed to meet on a quarterly basis.
**Village Planning is Inclusive:** On the account of involving different sectors or thematic areas, the local institutions, government functionaries at both micro and macro levels, and most importantly by mobilizing the community and reaching out to all the social groups, Village Planning also shows an inclusive approach.

Finally, explained below is the actual Village Planning process that forms the cornerstone of the intervention.

**3. The Village Planning Exercise**

The five-day Village Planning exercise is described by Sarathi in the following words:

“The Village Planning phase concentrates on identifying village level issues, mobilizing village opinion on these issues, establishing forums for taking up these issues, presenting these issues in form of an action plan, sharing this action plan with the government and setting up accountability and community based monitoring mechanisms” (SDF, Second Quarterly Report: 39).

This process, which is said to be strictly non-academic in nature is an extensive five-day participatory planning exercise during which a group of 4-5 facilitators (staff from Sarathi) resides in their allotted villages for the entire period living on what the villagers can offer in terms of both food and a place to stay. Community dialogue process is the central methodology through judicious application of tools and exercises (such as a simple Household Survey, Venn diagram) for engaging the people, to discuss and assess their situation—especially their quality of life in terms of health, nutrition, hygiene, education, water and sanitation. Once the people collectively become aware of their situation, the search for solutions begins, with the facilitators assisting them with the required information. The process eventually ends on the fifth day with the development of a Village Action Plan by the community containing the problems and solutions identified by it during those five days. Sarathi describes it is a dynamic and a

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result oriented process, whereby the Village Planning facilitators have the freedom to put their creative impulses to use for coming up with the most appropriate community mobilization approach. This planning process—according to Sarathi—is an attempt to first aim at establishing convergence between the village level service providers like the Pradhan, ANM, AWW, Primary School Teachers, etc. (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 9).

Following is an account of this five-day process that draws heavily on PRA tools and methodologies. The exercise takes place in three different phases. These are Pre-Planning, Planning and Post-planning.

**Pre-Planning Phase:** In the pre-planning phase, a zero day visit is carried out by a team from Sarathi. During this day-long visit, a socio-economic overview of the village is conducted, rapport is built with local service providers and the Panchayat, local catalysts such as Village Volunteers are identified and a friendly environment is created in the village by engaging children. Various tools are used during this visit including a transect walk, focus group discussions, children’s rally, hamlet and community meetings and individual contact. A tentative schedule for re-visit is agreed upon.

**Planning Phase:** The Planning phase is an intensive process carried out in a village for a minimum period of five days and nights. Facilitators from Sarathi use a wide variety of participatory tools such as door to door contact, BCC shows, social mapping, Venn diagramming among others (see Annexure C) to engage with and understand the community and its needs. Each of the five days has many specific objectives and expected outcomes that have evolved over a period of two years since the inception of the project. Based on one of the in-house publications of Sarathi, while the details of this planning phase have been provided in the annexure itself, the most recent account of these various objectives has been summarized by the Executive Director of Sarathi as follows:
### Description of the Five-Day Planning Phase

| Day 1: Familiarization with the community: | On day one, contact with the villagers is reestablished and this involves the usage of participatory tools such as Village Transect, Social mapping, Village Rally, school and *Anganwadi* visits, Village meeting, hamlet meetings etc. |
| Day 2: Collection of Qualitative and Quantitative data: | This involves the village youths such as Village Volunteers and adolescent girls’ groups in conducting a house-to-house baseline survey. By virtue of the fact that it is the community members who carry out the survey, it is unlike any other official surveys in allowing the community to identify its strengths and weaknesses. |
| Day 3: Analysis of Data: | This involves the compilation of the collected household survey information. Problems and Solutions are identified in order to sensitize the villagers on the key findings. |
| Day 4: Initiating System Development: | Women’s self help group and adolescent girls’ group are established to carry forward behavioral change work. |
| Day 5: Development of Village Action Plan: | Community members develop a plan on the basis of the Village Planning process—identifying the problems facing them, possible solutions and allocation of responsibility for follow up actions. The action plan is intended to be beneficial not just to the service providers but also to the involved stakeholders for the purpose of role clarity. |

**Figure 3: Description of the Five-Day Planning Phase**

At the end of the fifth day, the Village Action Plan (see Annexure F) is painted on a wall in a central location in the village and the responsibility for it is formally handed over from Sarathi facilitators to the *Gram Panchayat* in a Village Meeting. During this meeting, four to five Village Volunteers are identified by the community to drive forward change in the village.

**Post-planning:** After the five-day Village Planning intervention, the crucial work of follow up begins. This takes some specific forms (as mentioned below) and a number of more ad hoc forms. Village Volunteers undergo a five-day training programme intended to build their capacity to perform their new roles in the Village (see annexure D). Sarathi holds Reflection Meetings for groups of Volunteers at the cluster level on a monthly or bimonthly basis. A Village Information Centre is established holding a pool of information at the community level. One of Sarathi’s Field Coordinators visits the village every 2-3 months to meet with the Volunteers and Community Based Organizations, to

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18 As described by the Director, SDF.
help follow up the Action Plan, and to liaise with the frontline government workers in the village. Approximately one year after the Village Planning Intervention, a Re-Assessment analysis is performed to measure progress against the 19 indicators. In some villages, an intensive two-day Mini-Planning Exercise\textsuperscript{19} is carried out some time after the Village Planning intervention to identify new issues that have arisen in the village. At cluster level, Response Planning takes place identifying common needs.

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\textsuperscript{19} Mini Planning exercise is a three-day exercise that takes place in villages where Village Planning has already taken place. This exercise is carried out to monitor progress of old issues and to identify new ones (with a development of a new action plan). Issues other than those tackled in the Village Planning phase are dealt with during these three days i.e. the emphasis extends to areas such as irrigation, electricity and employment.
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALIZATION

After having discussed the Village Planning framework in the previous chapter, the aim of this chapter is to briefly discuss the development discourse and paradigm, the ideas of which the Village Planning intervention seems to resonate. In doing so, therefore, the intention is to situate the given intervention in a conceptual framework. For the purpose of doing so, the theory of Symbolic Interactionism, Freire’s discourse on popular education and critical pedagogy and the new paradigm of development as advocated by Robert Chambers would be discussed here.

I would open the discussion by referring to the modern sociological theory of Symbolic Interactionism. Ritzer (2000) discusses that one of the intellectual roots of this theory is the philosophy of pragmatism. He argues that, according to this school of thought, true reality does not exist ‘out there’ in the real world, but is rather actively created as we act in and toward the world. People base their knowledge of the world on what has proven useful to them and they are likely to alter what no longer works. He highlights three points that are critical for symbolic interactionism. Firstly, that there is a focus on the interaction between the actor and the world. Secondly, there exists a view of both the actors and the world as dynamic processes and not static structures. In other words, change is constant. And finally, a great importance is attributed to the actor’s ability to interpret the social world (Ritzer 2001: 338). The permanence of change that symbolic interactionists emphasize and their belief that human beings interpret and constantly construct their social world is also reflected in the work of one of the most popular theorists of education, Paulo Freire, whose work ‘Pedagogy of the oppressed’ I would now turn to.

This work by Freire (2001), which can be interpreted as a struggle for justice and equity in the educational system and also as exploring the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, calls for a new pedagogy – a pedagogy of the oppressed. Freire asserts that in order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they first have to perceive the reality of oppression as a limiting situation which they can
transform (Freire 2001: 49). In arguing that the oppressed must realize the conviction of the necessity for this struggle as subjects and not as objects, he stresses upon how their involvement in reality can only lead them to change it (ibid: 67). As Richard Shaull notes in the foreword of Freire’s work:

“Freire[...] operates on one basic assumption: that man’s ontological vocation (as he calls it) is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world and in doing so moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This world to which he relates is not a static closed order, a given reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved” (ibid: 32).

One notices here, the importance that Freire—like the proponents of symbolic interactionism—gives to the creation and transformation of reality by individuals.

Furthermore, Freire takes a highly critical stand against the ‘Banking Concept of Education’, where education being merely restricted to an act of depositing, turns teachers into ‘depositors’ and the students into ‘depositories’ or receptacles that are ‘filled’ by the teacher. He instead advocates the concept of ‘Dialogics’ in education, where the contradiction between teacher and student is dissolved, so that both become teachers and students (ibid: 72). When both the teacher and the student are co-intent on reality, both become subjects in the process of uncovering reality and recreating knowledge. Only then—as he argues—the presence of oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement (ibid: 69). Solidarity on the part of the oppressor—according to Freire—requires that one enters into the situation of those with whom one is solidary. True solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these “beings for another”. Freire’s work, therefore, translates into the pedagogy of the oppressed, a pedagogy that—he argues— must be forged with and not for the oppressed in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity (ibid: 48-49).
Freire’s emphasis on a constant engagement with and transformation of reality on the part of oppressed and his ideas on the oppressor entering into the situation of those with whom one is solidary, reverberates in the new professionalism paradigm of development espoused by Robert Chambers, one of the leading exponents of PRA. In his famous book ‘Rural Development: Putting the Last First’, Chambers (1988) refers to Freire’s writing as a source of inspiration:

“The works and writings of Paulo Freire whose pedagogy of the oppressed enables the poor to look critically at their world, to break out of their ‘culture of silence’ and to take control of their own destinies, has been an inspiration to those who have been seeking methods of research in which rural people are actors rather than objects of observation and sources of data [...]” (Chambers 1988: 73).

In this book, Chambers speaks of a fundamental gulf between a negative academic culture and a positive culture of development practitioners. Together, he refers to both of them as ‘outsiders’ (ibid: 28-29). In pointing out to the communication gap that exists between the two, Chambers argues, that on the one hand there are rural people and a handful of researchers with access to and understanding of the rich and detailed systems of knowledge which do not influence development; and on the other hand there are government organizations and staff engaged in development who are ignorant of that knowledge. To bridge the gap requires reversals to eliminate the unequal balance between outsiders’ knowledge and rural people’s knowledge (ibid: 84). In other words, as he argues, being outsiders, both cultures–academic and practical–share the top-down, core-periphery, centre-outwards biases of knowledge. Therefore, he instead advocates a culture of pluralism, which—for him—embodies a philosophy of reversals: reversing the narrowing of professional vision to broaden it, reversing the direction of teaching and learning to enable core people to learn from those who are peripheral, reversing the flows of information in organizations so that those at the top learn from those below (ibid: 44-46). This reversal of power relations is what Chambers calls a shift from ‘narrow professionalism’ to ‘new professionalism’ (Chambers 1994). This new professionalism, which Chambers also refers to as ‘a new paradigm of development’, has as its central thrusts both decentralization and empowerment (ibid: 11). He explains these two terms as under:
“Decentralization means that resources and discretion are devolved, turning back the inward and upward flows of resources and people. Empowerment means that people, especially poor people, are enabled to take more control of productive assets, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element” (ibid: 11).

Thus, the discourse on the tradition of participatory learning and knowledge production embodied in Freire’s work, in coming together with the new professionalism of Chambers has established a continuum that has been a source of inspiration for many of the present-day development programmes that employ participatory research techniques. Based on a summary of characteristics of participatory research as provided by the secretary general of an international network of participatory researchers formed under the international council of Adult Education, Brown and Tandon (1983) give an account of the same by reiterating the following. One finds in this account of participatory research, the presence of the ideas in Freire’s and Chamber’s writings. The ultimate goal of participatory research—they mention—is a fundamental structural transformation and the improvement in the lives of those involved. It is the community that is in control of the entire process. The awareness in people of their own abilities and resources is strengthened and mobilizing or organizing is supported. The term ‘researcher’ can refer to both the community or the work-place persons involved as well as those with specialized training. Outside researchers are committed participants and learners in a process that leads to militancy rather than detachment (Brown and Tandon 1983: 279).

Thus individuals and organizations have increasingly realized the potential of this tradition in the field of qualitative research and collaborative planning (Von Kotze 1998). Village Planning is one such organizational endeavor. One of the project reports state:

“Participatory approaches on the other hand puts [sic] people first and therefore their needs and priorities are given shape of an action plan intended to be achieved through joint efforts of the government/implementing agency and the community[...]Participatory approaches hence are people centered and as such look at people as solutions to the problem rather than as passive beneficiaries. Therefore people in this case become the subjects rather than mere objects in the development process” (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 6).
As discussed in the previous chapter, in its claim of being a bottoms-up planning approach that challenges the lop-sided development methodologies and top-down development process, Village Planning is premised on this very new development paradigm as espoused by Chambers, which involves a reversal of flows, where those at the top learn from those below. By stressing upon the nature of participatory approaches in being people centered, by putting them first and by treating them as subjects rather than mere objects in the process of development, Village Planning echoes the ethos of that very continuum that was discussed above, where Freire’s ontological vocation of individuals being subjects, who act upon and transform their world, and his insistence on the oppressor’s duty of entering into the situation of the oppressed merges with the new professionalism of Chambers wherein, as against the top-down academic and practical cultures, he talks of a the third culture of rural people as being the true centre of attention and learning, where poor people own and control their productive assets (Chambers 1994: 11 and Chambers 1988: 46).

In discussing the conceptual framework for the intervention, it is hoped that the first task of this dissertation has been accomplished. The remainder of the thesis would focus on the second more significant task of problematization, wherein a detailed discussion on the buzzwords would be carried out in order to ultimately assess the hypothesis that was proposed in the beginning. However, before taking up the same, the underlying theoretical background that has guided this endeavor of problematization would be discussed. This is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three main theories would be identified in the theoretical framework. I would firstly draw upon the writings of the Argentinean political theorist Ernesto Laclau, wherein his paper titled “The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology” would be particularly discussed at length. This theoretical model would be used later to specifically engage with the buzzword ‘participation’. The second set of theory would be that of discourses and their tactical polyvalence, as it features in Foucault’s famous work ‘History of Sexuality’. Finally I would discuss the paper by lecturers Katy Gardner and David Lewis titled: ‘Dominant Paradigms Overturned or ‘Business as usual?’: Development Discourse and the White Paper on International Development’, which applies to ‘Development’, the same ideas on discourse as advocated by Foucault, in his aforementioned work.

I. Laclau and ‘The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology’

For a successful application of this theory in the dissertation, a detailed discussion of the aforementioned work by Laclau and the arguments and the hypothesis that he presents therein is called for. By delving into and linking Laclau’s concepts—such as Distortion, Constitutive Distortion, Incarnation, Deformation and Equivalence, the following discussion, that is further divided into four sub-sections, would provide an account of the same.

The essence of this work by Laclau lies in his conception of ideology being an illusion of an extra-discursive closure. In his endeavor to see “the logic governing the dissolution of the terrain classically occupied by the theory of ideology” (Laclau 1997: 298), the aforementioned forms his hypothesis.

He begins the discussion by stating that in the case of ideology as a system of ideas, the unity of that system is dependent on the possibility of finding a point outside this system, from which a critique of ideology could proceed. Making such a point accessible, from
which reality speaks without discursive mediations—he suggests—is the cornerstone of the ‘critique of ideology’ approach. Reasserting the ideas of the Slovenian sociologist and philosopher Slavoj Zizek in one of his essays on theories of ideology, Laclau, however, makes a claim similar to that of the former by saying that the very assumption of the supposed ‘zero level’ of the ideological of a pure extra-discursive reality is itself a misconception *par excellence*. With regard to the critique of an ideology, therefore, by negating the presence of a metalinguistic level and underlining the irreducible nature of the rhetorico-discursive devices of a text, Laclau in fact negates the existence of any such exterior point. Hence in suggesting so, he dismisses the existence of an extra-ideological reality, whose very operation—as he suggests—depends on mechanisms belonging to the ideological realm. By means of this dismissal, he makes the following point:

“*What we are witnessing is not the decline of a theoretical object as a result of a narrowing of its field of operation but rather the opposite: its indefinite expansion, consequent to the explosion of the dichotomies which—within a certain problematic—confronted it with other objects*” (ibid: 298).

Having said this, however, it is important to mention the distinction that Laclau makes between the critique of ideology and an ideological critique. Even though he rejects the former, the latter—according to him—is possible, with the argument being that all critiques are essentially intra-ideological (ibid: 299).

Two things follow in the wake of this extra-discursive viewpoint being unattainable. Firstly, the discourses organizing social practices are both incommensurable and on equal footing with all others. Secondly, notions such as ‘distortions’ and ‘false representations’ become meaningless (ibid: 299).

The next section of this chapter would give an insight into one of the major tenets of Laclau’s theory namely Constitutive Distortion. However, before going on to the next section, it is important to briefly state what Laclau means by the terms ‘originary’, ‘self

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transparent’ and ‘closure’—terms that figure repeatedly throughout Laclau’s theoretical account. He defines these respective terms as follows: Something is originary as long as it does not have to go outside itself in order to constitute what it is, it is self transparent as long as its internal dimensions are in a relation of fixed solidarity between themselves; and something can be said to be closed as long as the ensemble of its effects can be discerned without having to go beyond its originary meaning (ibid: 301).

1. Constitutive Distortion

In ‘On Populist Reason’—one of his more recent works—Laclau (2005: 25) in reiterating Saussure’s argument, asserts that just like—according to the latter—there are no positive terms but only differences in language, the same could be said to be true for any signifying or objective element (Laclau 2004: 5). Therefore he suggests that:

“[…] an action is what it is only through its differences with other possible actions and with other signifying elements—words or actions—which can be successive or simultaneous” (ibid: 5).

This concept of ‘Difference’ is essential to understand the concept of Constitutive Distortion. In other words, it is this tendency of—what Laclau calls—a purely differential ensemble to differentiate itself from something else that forms the central idea of the concept of constitutive distortion. The element of constitutive-ness that Laclau emphasizes becomes clear in the fact that this other difference, from which that signifying object differentiates itself, would actually be internal and not external to the totality of this signifying element (ibid: 7). And that is precisely the reason why the distortion is constitutive. As one would see, the same idea is even reflected in Laclau’s definition of discourse, which he defines as:

“By discourse […] I do not mean anything essentially restricted to the areas of speech and writing, but any complex of elements, in which relations play the constitutive role. This means that elements do not pre-exist the relational complex, but are constituted through it. ‘Relation’ and ‘Objectivity’ are thus synonymous” (ibid: 5).

In order to probe deeper into constitutive distortion, Laclau elaborates upon the term distortion itself and argues, that there are two requirements for any kind of distortion to
take place. Firstly it is essential that the primary meaning is presented as different from what it is. Secondly the distortive operation and not just its results have to be visible. However, in dealing with constitutive distortion per se—as he goes on to suggest—one is not only positing the originary meaning (as this is required by any distortion) but is also withdrawing the same (as the distortion is constitutive). Laclau’s intention in saying so seems to incite the reader to ask, that if such is the case with constitutive distortion, then how are the above two requirements (that are otherwise needed for any kind of distortion to take place) fulfilled? In such a case as—Laclau argues—the only logical possibility of pulling together these two seemingly contradictory dimensions is if the original meaning is illusionary and the distortive operation consists in precisely creating that illusion: that is to project into something that is essentially divided, an illusion of fullness and self transparency that it lacks (Laclau 1997: 301). If one notices carefully, one would realize, then, that in the above statement, Laclau actually shows how these two requirements are met in the case of constitutive distortion. In other words, if the primary meaning is being presented as something different from itself, then ‘an illusion of fullness and self transparency’ provides the answer to the question of what this something different is and the fact that ‘the distortive operation creates an illusion’ serves as an answer to the question of how does the operation of distortion become visible. The answers to both these questions would become clearer through the discussion made in the next two subsections that take up these questions individually.

2. Engaging with ‘Fullness of Community’ and ‘Incarnation’: ‘What this something different is?’

In order for this discussion to be able to further illuminate these two answers given by Laclau, I would take up here an exemplar that Laclau cites later in his work.

He wonderfully illustrates how, the nationalization of the basic industries, if proposed as an economic solution in a third world country, can be transformed from being a mere technicality of running an economy into an ideology. The ‘particularity’ of this economic technicality—he suggests—could start becoming an ‘ideology’, the moment it starts
including other meanings into its domain vis-à-vis emancipation from foreign domination, the elimination of capitalist waste, social justice for the excluded population among others: in other words the moment it starts presenting itself as more than itself (ibid: 303). This act of an identity presenting itself as being something different than itself, he calls ‘Incarnation’. Throughout Laclau’s theoretical framework, ‘this identity’ itself is referred to as the incarnating body and ‘the something different/the other’ is what is being incarnated.

To actualize its own meaning as an ideology, therefore, this economic panacea requires the presence of these other things. In such a relationship, the actual full meaning of this particular identity of nationalization of the basic industries (which is otherwise a mere economic panacea) is dislocated through the process of constitutive distortion. This is termed by Laclau as the process of Dislocation. However, distortion—according to Laclau—includes not just dislocation but also Concealment. This dislocation of what presents itself as a closed identity is what is concealed. And the act of concealment lies in projecting on to that identity, the dimension of closure that it ultimately lacks (ibid: 302).

Three significant things are to be observed as a result of the above. Firstly the fact that that dimension of closure (i.e. in this case, the emancipation from foreign domination, justice for the excluded etc) is something that is actually absent or impossible. However in spite of being impossible, it is necessary too. As Laclau says:

“In other terms: the operation of closure is impossible but at the same time necessary. Impossible because of the constitutive dislocation which lies at the heart of any structural arrangement. Necessary, because without that fictitious fixing of meaning there would not be meaning at all” (ibid: 302).

Hence, the presence of—say for instance—the ‘elimination of capitalist waste’ is absolutely necessary for the nationalization of the industries to derive its own meaning. And just because the whole and sole purpose of the presence of ‘elimination of capitalist waste’ is only for the sake of ‘the nationalization of industries’ to be able to realize its meaning, it is practically absent or—as Laclau would call it—impossible!
This is where the discussion on ideology being an illusion of an extra discursive closure—a task that has been undertaken in the beginning of this chapter already—is revived in Laclau’s work. The notion of an extra-ideological reality is a misconception because the notion of that "closed identity" (read: the zero level of an extra-discursive reality) is itself the very form of misrepresenting that through which any identity acquires its fictitious coherence. It is this dialectics between necessity and impossibility that, as Laclau argues, gives ideology its terrain of emergence (ibid: 302).

Resulting from the above, the second important thing that Laclau points out is that this dialectics creates in any ideological representation a schism that is hard to break. This is described in Laclau’s words as:

“On the one hand closure as such, being an impossible operation, cannot have a content of its own and only shows itself through its projection in an object different from itself. On the other hand this particular object, which at some point assumes the role of incarnating the closure of an ideological horizon, will be deformed as a result of that incarnating function” (ibid: 303).

Laclau’s essential argument involved in the aforesaid is that this schism is essentially constitutive in nature, because the object to be represented is both impossible and necessary. His concept of constitutive distortion could not have become any clearer than this.

Thus in the example cited in this section, if the ‘nationalization of the basic industries’ as an ideology, derives its meaning from the combination of emancipation from foreign domination, the elimination of capitalist waste and social justice for the excluded population, then this economic cure is presenting itself as being different i.e. it is presenting itself as being the latter itself. The term coined by Laclau to refer to this latter impossible-yet-necessary object that is different, is ‘fullness of community’ or ‘community as a coherent whole’ (ibid: 303).
Thirdly this dimension of closure or the fullness of community that is both absent and necessary is also radically incommensurable with the particular object incarnating the closure. As Laclau himself mentions, this forms the working hypothesis of his work and would also be shortly referred to in the next sub-section.

Hence, it is hoped, that the answer to the question of ‘what this something different is’ has been explained through the account presented above. The next part of the chapter would be an attempt to explain the answer that Laclau gives for his second question.

3. Engaging with ‘Deformation’ and ‘Equivalence’: ‘How does the operation become visible?’

Building upon his first answer, Laclau mentions that if what an ideological distortion projects on a particular object is the absent fullness of the community, then this process of ideological distortion also includes making a certain content equivalent to set of other contents. This process that is inherent in ideological distortion–Laclau calls–deformation (ibid: 304). Therefore in the same example that is mentioned above, if the particularity of economic measure of nationalization of the basic industries is presenting itself as or incarnating the absent fullness of global human emancipation by virtue of getting associated with the aforesaid combination of ‘emancipation from foreign domination’, ‘the elimination of capitalist waste’ and ‘social justice for the excluded population’ (as all three have something to do with global human emancipation), then as part of the process of deformation, this particularity of the economic measure also comes to be related to these three different transformations through a relationship of equivalence. That is why Laclau mentions that deformation is inherent in incarnation. This point would again be taken up briefly towards the end of this section. It is important to mention that Laclau refers to this relationship as ‘chains of equivalence.’ Each of these equivalents represents an incommensurable totality. This operation of taking up, by a particularity, of an incommensurable universal signification, is what Laclau theorizes as Hegemony (Laclau 2004: 8).
There are two extremely important things that Laclau points out here. First that equivalence does not mean identity. In other words, each of these transformations retains something of its own identity. However, as far as the chain of equivalence is concerned, because each of these transformations stands for or is equivalent to the absent fullness of the community, what is weakened through its participation in the chain is the purely privative character of the identity of each of these transformations (Laclau 1997: 304). By saying the following, Laclau then comes up with a proposition which would be particularly crucial for engaging with the buzzword participation. He says:

“The only thing we can say is that the relationship between particular and equivalential identities is unstable: everything depends on what function – representing a content within the community or representing the latter as an absent fullness–will prevail” (ibid: 304).

The second thing that he highlights is as follows. Just like in the first case of equivalence or deformation, where each of these transformations retains something of its own identity, in the case of Incarnation too, projecting the fullness of community–as Laclau suggests–cannot entirely eliminate the particularity of the content through which the incarnation takes place (ibid: 304). If this were so, then the incarnating body and the incarnated both would become commensurable with each other, which would be contradictory to the very hypothesis that Laclau works with (as discussed under the third point made in the previous section).

It is by virtue of these two facts, which underline that particularity in either case cannot be completely done away with– be it the particularity of the individual transformations in the case of deformation/equivalence or the particularity of the incarnating body in the case of incarnation–that the distortive operation becomes visible. As he mentions:

“We see here what it is that makes possible the visibility of the distortive operation: the fact that neither of the two movements in which it is based can logically reach its ad quem term” (ibid: 304).

In the above section, which mainly dealt with the processes of deformation and equivalence, the second question, therefore, also gets answered. Before proceeding with the next section, it is important to recall the previously mentioned argument of deformation being inherent in incarnation. Through the above, Laclau intends to
underline the fact that equivalential deformation precedes the process of incarnation. This is justified by Laclau as under:

\[\text{...}] \text{"the incarnating body has to express something different from itself but as, however, this "something different" lacks an identity of its own, its only means of constitution are the contents belonging to the incarnating body" (ibid: 305).}\]

The compatibility between these two requisites–according to Laclau–would be possible only if some deformation of the incarnating body’s contents takes place.

4. Linking ‘Chains of Equivalence’, ‘Floating Signifiers’ and ‘Empty Signifiers’ with destruction of meaning

This section would focus on the explanation given by Laclau, as to how by its very nature equivalence involves the destruction of meaning by its very proliferation. As an example Laclau defines the term welfare through words that would come in an equivalential relationship with the former: words such as housing, house, health etc. As per the logic of Laclau’s concept of chains of equivalence, each one of these particularities would therefore be used to name a common something else (i.e. welfare) and this naming would be possible as long as each of these particularities forms a part of the chain. This chain could be expanded indefinitely. However, Laclau suggests, that if one were to specify, what each of these links in the chain have in common, then the more the chain expands, the more the differential meaning of each particularity would have to be dropped in order that each particularity continues to stand for the absent fullness of the community. It is for this reason that Laclau speaks about the destruction of meaning through its very proliferation (ibid: 305). In order to elaborate on the above, as part of the same discussion, he also uses two terms that–as he says–are used very often in semiotic and post structuralist literature. These two terms are ‘floating signifiers’ and ‘empty signifiers.’ While the former suggests an overflowing of the meaning, the latter suggest there being no meaning. Laclau claims that the emptiness of a signifier can be attributed to its very floating nature. In order to explain this, Laclau takes the example of the signifier ‘Democracy’ (ibid: 306). However, for reasons of ‘Participation’ being the
particular buzzword to which Laclau’s theory would be applied in the forthcoming chapter, I would use the same for the purpose of this discussion, so that it need not be repeated and instead could be evoked later on.

Laclau suggests that in order for a term to be called a signifier, it is important that the floating term is articulated to opposed discursive chains and secondly that within these discursive chains, the term functions not only as a differential component but also has an equivalential relationship with all other components of the chain of equivalence (ibid: 306). Hence if the term participation is presented as an essential component of a world where people plan their own development, then the fixing of the meaning of the term will not only occur by merely positing it against a world where people do not have the freedom to do so, but by making it one of the names of the fullness of the community, that such a world would strive to achieve: vis-à-vis other buzzwords such as empowerment, accountability and ownership. In other words this would involve—as Laclau argues—the construction of a chain of equivalence where ‘participation’ and certain other words in the discourse like empowerment, ownership and accountability would be equivalent to each other in pointing out to the totality of a world where people are not passive beneficiaries in the process of development. Hence by floating a term within the chain of equivalence, we are actually emptying it of its meaning, because in a situation, where each term in the chain of equivalence is deployed to represent something common, the purely privative character of each one of these words would be weakened—a point that was also discussed previously in the same chapter.

Through this complex and detailed theoretical account that Laclau creates in ‘The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology’, he aims to provide the reader with the necessary means for her to be able to conjure up the idea, which forms the ultimate thesis of his work and with which Laclau opens up this discussion: his idea of ideology being an illusion of an extra-discursive closure. At the root of all ideological processes, he suggests, is this double movement of incarnation and deformation of particular contents through the expansion of the chain of equivalence (ibid: 315). Laclau calls these processes ‘distorting mechanisms’ and contends that it is the study of these mechanisms
that makes this illusion possible and that constitutes the specific field of the theory of ideology (ibid: 320). An ideology comes into being the moment a particular content represents itself as more than itself (ibid: 303). As he says:

“[...] this operation of attributing the function of representing the absent fullness of the community to a chain of particular contents is ideological in the strict sense of the term [...] The illusion of closure is something we can negotiate with, but never eliminate. Ideology is a dimension which belongs to the structure of all possible experience” (ibid: 311).

As stated above, this discussion on the various concepts, as identified in Laclau’s work, would be evoked in the next chapter to analyze the buzzword participation, where participation would be treated as a signifying element or an incarnating body that associates itself with other buzzwords in a chain of equivalence. I would now turn to Foucault’s theory of tactical polyvalence of discourses.

II. Foucault and ‘The Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses’

It is definitely not possible within the limited scope of this thesis, to bring about a detailed discussion of any of the ideas by Foucault, yet one particular discussion about the ‘Rule of tactical polyvalence of discourses’ in his aforementioned work is expected to provide, to a great extent, the theoretical backdrop for what has been proposed through this dissertation. Due to the above mentioned constraint, I would try in this section, to the best of my interpretative capacity of this particular segment on discourses in Foucault’s work, to discuss the same. Before carrying out the actual discussion on this specific part that focuses on the tactical polyvalence of discourses, however, the major ideas of this work by Foucault have been briefly presented in order to ground the former within the overall framework of the work itself.

Contrasting the advent of the seventeenth century, which—in Foucault's words—was a period when bodies made a display of themselves, with the nineteenth century era of Victorian bourgeoisie, when silence became the rule for the subject of Sex, Foucault takes up a task of analyzing the repression of sex and power by asking the following question (Foucault 1990: 3).
“Why do we say with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?” (ibid: 8-9).

By raising questions such as ‘why has sexuality been so widely discussed and what has been said about it?’, ‘what are the effects of power generated by what was said?’ and ‘what are the links between these discourses, these effects of power and the pleasures that were invested by them?’, Foucault states that his objective is to analyze a certain form of knowledge regarding sex in terms of power (ibid: 11, 92).

He then describes what power means to him. He argues that he sees the mechanisms of power not in terms of sovereignty of the state, the form of law or an overall unity of domination, but rather as the multiplicity of ‘force relations’ immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process, which through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support that these relations find in each other in order to eventually form a system or the contradictions that isolate them from each other and the strategies in which they take effect (ibid: 92). Applying this perception of power to the discourse on Sex, Foucault argues that:

“ […] the question that we must address, then, is not: Given a specific state structure, how and why is it that power needs to establish a knowledge of sex? […] What overall domination was served by the concern, evidenced since the eighteenth century, to produce true discourses in sex? […] What law presided over both the regularity of sexual behaviour and the conformity of what was said about it?” It is rather: [...] what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How did they make possible these kinds of discourses, and conversely, how were these discourses used to support power relations? How was the action of these power relations modified by their very exercise, entailing a strengthening of and weakening of others, with effects of resistance and counterinvestments, so that there has never existed one type of stable subjugation, given once and for all” (ibid: 97).

Thus, in saying so, Foucault advocates the usage of the aforementioned notion of power, when it comes to the discourse on sex: that is not to ask questions related to the concepts of domination, form of law, sovereignty of the state that are merely terminal forms of
power, but to see the discourse on sex in the light of multiple and mobile power relations. It is here that Foucault mentions four rules related to the discourse on power and sexuality that he calls cautionary prescriptions. One of these is called the rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourses (ibid: 98). Foucault’s conception of power as a multiplicity of force relationships that has been discussed above is clearly visible in this discussion. Following is an account of the same.

**Rule of the Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses**

Foucault begins the discussion by saying that what is said about sex must not be analyzed simply as the surface of projection of these power mechanisms. It is in discourse that knowledge and power come to be joined together. Therefore he suggests that instead of perceiving the world of discourse to be divided between accepted and excluded discourse or dominant and dominated discourse, we should rather see discourses as a series of discontinued segments whose tactical function—Foucault suggests—is neither uniform nor stable. In other words, discourses should be perceived as a multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies (ibid: 100). Foucault argues that:

> “It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects [...] that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes” (ibid: 100).

He then cites an example of how if, on the one hand, the presence of the discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, psychic hermaphroditism etc in the nineteenth century literature and psychiatry made possible a strong advance of social controls into areas of perversity, then on the other hand, it also opened up the possibility of the emergence of an reverse discourse: i.e. when homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy and naturality be acknowledged often in the same vocabulary and categories by which it was medically disqualified. By means of this example, Foucault intends to show how discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or against it. By transmitting and producing power, a discourse can be an instrument and an effect of power, but at the same time by undermining and exposing this
very power, it can also be a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourses therefore make room for processes that are complex and unstable. There is no discourse of power and opposite it another discourse that runs counter to it. According to Foucault, discourses are ‘tactical elements’ or blocks operating in the field of force relations. While contradictory discourses can exist within the same strategy, there could be a possibility of discourses being able to circulate from one strategy to another opposing strategy without changing their form (ibid: 101-102). Foucault says that:

“We must not expect the discourses on sex to tell us, above all, what strategy they derive from, or what moral divisions they accompany, or what ideology–dominant or dominated–they represent; rather we must question them on the two levels of their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur” (ibid: 102).

The above discussion was crucial for this dissertation and would be evoked later in the ‘Synthesis’ chapter.

III. Gardener and Lewis on ‘Development as Discourse’

In line with the discussion of Foucault’s ideas upon discourse and power, I would extend the theoretical background of this thesis by also including in its framework, the work of Gardner and Lewis (2000). Conceding the fact as to how the idea of discourse has had a huge impact on the anthropology of development during the 1990’s, the authors open the discussion by asserting that the increasing currency of Foucauldian discourse analysis in order to understand development, has given rise to a range of important questions about the ways in which knowledge, power and action are linked in the work of development agencies and projects around the world.
Gardner and Lewis briefly cite a critique of the use of the discourse theory by referring to a review, by Agrawal (1996)\(^{21}\), of the work of Escobar et al (1992)\(^{22}\). The authors discuss how, for Agrawal (1996) in his review of Escobar et al (1992), the latter’s political need to suggest alternative solutions to the global problems of inequality, poverty and exploitation comes to suggest that they are constantly contradicting their ‘deconstructionist’ stance by implicitly admitting that there are indeed problems out there which need to be solved. By citing this work by Agrawal (1996) as a critique of Escobar et al, Gardner and Lewis also point out that the former perceives the latter’s arguments as becoming ‘tautological’. Hence, citing Agrawal (1996), Gardner and Lewis suggest that when everything is reduced to discourse, there are enormous difficulties “in moving beyond critique and pointing out productive avenues of change” (Agrawal 1996: 465, as cited in Gardner and Lewis 2000: 16).

Here, the citation of Agrawal’s critique that was originally cited in Gardner and Lewis (2000) was crucial to lay the groundwork for eventually highlighting the latter’s argument, which is essential for this dissertation. Immediately after citing the above example, Gardner and Lewis state the aim of their work by saying:

“In this article we shall build on these and related critiques of the use of discourse theory in the anthropology of development to argue that deconstructionism can only become politically engaged when it is used to demonstrate the fluidity and heterogeneity of discourses within development as well as the power relations which they inevitably involve” (Gardner and Lewis 2000: 16).

Therefore, if one notices carefully, the reiteration of Agrawal’s aforementioned statement by Garner and Lewis (2000) in their work and the subsequent articulation of the latter’s aim, where heterogeneity of discourses within development is underlined, is meant to carry an inherent implication of essentially the same argument by Foucault that was presented previously in this section: that one must not imagine on the one hand a discourse and on the other, another one that runs counter to it; it is only because


discourses are ‘tactical elements’ operating in the field of force relations, that apart from being a major instrument of power, discourses can also act as a point of resistance in order to make way for an opposing strategy.

In an attempt to show what they mean by this heterogeneity of development discourses, Lewis and Gardner then, analyze three problems of the ‘development as discourse’ approach. Firstly they mention, that rather than associating ‘development’ as being wholly top-down and hegemonic in nature, the world cannot be simplistically divided between ‘developers’ and ‘victims of development’ (ibid: 17). Secondly they contend that instead of conceptualizing development as something homogeneous, development should rather be seen as a discourse with multiple and ever changing realities and narratives. Definitions of development may vary between societies, groups as well as institutions (ibid: 18). Thirdly they suggest that the task of deconstructing particular aspects of development discourse can indeed have a directly practical (and political) outcome, because to reveal an apparently objective reality as a construct and as the product of particular historical and political contexts, helps problematize dominant paradigms and open the way for alternative discourses (ibid: 18-19). And because the authors underline that such a deconstruction is possible only if it is used to demonstrate the contingent and fluid nature of discourses and positionings within development, their essential argument in the paper is that just as development discourses are contested and negotiated from within, they can and do change, both from within the institutions, which produce them and in response to outside pressure (ibid: 17-19). This, the authors substantiate by using the Department for International Development’s recent White Paper as a case study, and by subsequently showing how, as a result of changes within the department (in terms of personnel and balance of power between interest groups), the change that the White Paper has gone through, indicates that discourses are fluid and do they change at the level of documentation.

The account on discourses provided by Foucault (1990) and Gardner and Lewis (2000) respectively would be recalled in the last chapter, where it would be discussed, how these
two theoretical accounts underpin both the hypothesis as well as the task of problematization, which becomes the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5: PROBLEMATIZATION

Without a doubt, the Village Planning Intervention in Lalitpur is widely perceived to have been a success. There is significant justification for this perception.

Through its Behavior Change Communication component, Village Planning seeks to effect change on 19 key indicators, and its success in doing so is impressive. This is one of the lasting impacts of the intervention in these villages. Critical information was far more widely understood by community members where Village Planning had taken place, and access to this information had clearly brought about impressive changes in behavioral patterns. Although the understanding of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and critical information pertaining to the health of pregnant and lactating mothers was more tenuous and varied significantly between the villages and also between the different communities of each village, certain other indicators of behavior change performed remarkably well. The significance of the use of iodized salt, in particular, was very well known among all community members. Similarly, awareness of the causes of HIV and its transmission was found to be pervasive, save for members of the ST communities. Both the communities’ awareness of HIV and their willingness to discuss it without significant inhibitions are testament to the powerful impact of Village Planning on this significant area of behavior change. On the front of the second component of service actions too, the intervention has had a huge impact on generating demand for services. Various success stories in villages such as the appointment of new teachers, installation and repairing of hand-pumps, scaling up of registration of births and increasing the enrollment in primary schools spoke of the success of Village Planning in

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23 For example, across the three Blocks (Birdha, Talbehat and Jakhaura) the intervention has increased the number of mothers initiating colostrum and breastfeeding from 39% to 86.2%; it has increased the number of families consuming iodized salt from 15.4% to 53.7%; it has increased the number of children (in the age group 14-18) with knowledge of HIV/AIDS from nil to 41.3%; From a baseline of no schools providing hand-washing with soap, it has ensured that 25 schools have started providing hand-washing with soap (SDF, April 2007: Slide 9).
grassroots demand generation²⁴ (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 22-23). Apart from bringing about improvements at the statistical level, the impact of Village Planning was observed to be much broader and often much less tangible. As for instance in the case of the women from some of these villages talked explicitly of their new-found courage to speak to and work with men in the village and about how much more outgoing they had become as a result of the intervention. In another such case, in the wake of the awareness generated by Village Planning, the Adolescent Girls’ Group in one of the villages had succeeded in mobilizing the village to prevent a 16-year old girl from getting married²⁵. It was impossible to miss sights that one may not otherwise associate with villages: such as children’s rallies, monthly meetings and discussions among the women’s and adolescent girls groups (ibid: 23).

These measures of success that have been very well recorded in Sarathi’s Reassessment Analysis and its annual and quarterly reports, show, that by any measure, the Lalitpur Village Planning Intervention must be seen as a success story. As discussed in the chapter on conceptual framework, the tradition of participatory research that it is based on, Village Planning exhibits the features of the same by making the facilitators active participants and learners during their five-day stay in the village itself, by placing ‘community’ at the centre and by aiming to bring about a structural transformation and improvement in people’s lives that enables people to become aware of their own situation, to identify their problems and to devise their solutions. It is these characteristics of participatory research and learning that stand behind the success of Village Planning in the areas of behavior change and service delivery and that also make the intervention unique. However, as I mentioned at the outset of this work, the exposure to this participatory project revealed a few aspects related to this very word ‘participation’ that

²⁴ Institutional deliveries increased from 19.1 to 28.8 percent, Access to sanitation facilities increased from 9.9 to 15.1 percent, it has increased the school enrollment of children in the age group 6-14 years from 91.2% to 98 %; and it has ensured 36.7% (or 140 of 381) of non-functioning hand-pumps were repaired. In the Birdha block alone, from a baseline of no children having their births registered, it has ensured that 66.4% children were registered ( SDF, April 2007: Slide 9).

²⁵ These accounts were narrated to us (the research team) by the women and the adolescent girls group themselves.
gave rise to certain questions that in the first place inspired the ideas for the purpose of writing this thesis. I would now make an attempt in this chapter to discuss these aspects by problematizing them in the form of three different buzzwords: community, capacity building or facilitation and participation. For this purpose, several statements from the primary literature, in which each of these buzzwords figure, have been cited. Also, each of these buzzwords would be discussed by referring to the debates that feature in the literature on participation and development. Through the respective works of authors John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff, Astrid Von Kotze, and John Gaventa and Andrea Cornwall that would be discussed in each of the three sub-sections, this chapter, therefore, would engage with a process of marrying an experiential narrative and the arguments made via literature review.

I. Problematizing ‘Community’

“Village Planning entails a series of participatory exercises in which communities assess and analyze their own situation; explore alternatives and potential actions; develop an action plan for development; and monitor progress against these plans” (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 7).

“The Village Planning process is all about enhancing the stake of the community in taking up the issues of common concern, identifying their possible causes and developing practical plans for addressing these issues” (SDF, Second Quarterly Report: 22).

“Convergent approaches adopted in the past have proved that it is very important to reach out to the community from all corners if holistic development is to take place” (SDF, Annual Progress Report: 2).

“Participatory tools adopted during the process further aids in involving the whole community in the process of developing village action plans” (ibid: 2).

26 As mentioned previously too, all the facts that have been mentioned under the three sub-sections of this chapter of the thesis are findings that came out of the primary research, most of which were originally documented in the report that me and my co-interns drafted for UNICEF, India within the internship framework. They have therefore been appropriately cited from Annexure B and also as they appeared in the report.
For this part of the chapter, I would refer to two separate issues. To begin with, I would like to bring back into focus, a particular group of people that had been discussed in one of the preceding chapters– the Sahariyas.

In all three villages that were visited (where village planning had taken place), it was observed that in comparison to other parts of the village, the levels of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, use of iodized salt, exclusive breast-feeding and other behavior change issues in the Sahariya hamlets were painfully low. Knowledge of critical information among pregnant Sahariya women (like frequency of check-ups and vaccinations during pregnancy) was also negligible in the two villages of Sunaura and Jamalpur. This would not have been helped by lack of ST involvement in the Community Based Organizations that drive forward behavior change (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 18, 29).

In all three villages, STs were less likely to access key services. Despite being entitled to them, Sahariyas in Sunaura did not have BPL cards (also known as ration cards) and were just beginning to receive labor cards that ensured access to the government’s NREG Scheme. Also it was observed that most Sahariya women in village Sunaura did not use the services of the AWC. In the case of Jamalpur, a highway divided the village into two parts: the main village on the one hand and an isolated Sahariya inhabitation on the other. Women and children in this part of the village didn’t avail themselves of the services of the AWC (i.e. women didn’t go to the health and nutrition sessions organized by the centre and children didn’t attend pre-school) because there was no AWC in the Sahariya hamlet at all and both did not go to either of the two AWCs in the other part of the village. The AWW from the one of the AWCs of the other part of the village was given the responsibility to come to this hamlet and cater to their needs. And the children were

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27 Under the Government’s Public Distribution System (PDS), BPL cards entitle those who fall below poverty line, to provision of food at subsidized rates.

28 The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 provides for the enhancement of livelihood security of households by ensuring minimum 100 days of guarantees wage employment to every household in the rural areas, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Every person who has done the work given to him under the scheme is entitled to receive wages at the wage rate for each day of work. Source: National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 The Gazette of India, Ministry of Law and Justice, National Portal of India, http://india.gov.in/outerwin.htm?id=http://drd.nic.in/

29 This was particularly problematic in the case of children for whom it was difficult to cross the main road to get to the main village.
being taught by one of the more educated Sahariya girls (who was also a Volunteer), who was running an open school for the children (Ovung, N. et al, 2007: 18, 20, 30 and FGD with pregnant Sahariya women, Jamalpur: Day 4, in Annexure B).

In the case of Sahariyas, this slack in both behavioral change indicators as well as in issues of service delivery could be attributed to the lack of ownership of the intervention. In Sunaura, of the seven Sahariya households, most could not remember the Village Planning exercise which took place eight months earlier and none could identify the issues they had raised for the Village Action Plan. Similar was the case in the Sahariya hamlet of Jamalpur, where a group discussion with pregnant women revealed that they knew nothing about the intervention. It was precisely due to this that the need for an AWC in this isolated Sahariya hamlet (as mentioned above) was never represented on the Action Plan. The ST community members’ memories of the five-day process were, if anything, of people coming from the main village to explain things to them (behavior change communication). There was no sense that the Sahariyas had themselves gone to the main village to participate in village-wide activities. In some cases, certain ST community members were not sure that they had been present in the village at the time of the five-day Village Planning intervention. This was so because—as mentioned before—for several months each year, the Sahariya families migrate to construction sites outside the village for wage labor. Hence, it was observed that, in some cases, Village Planning took place in their absence. In addition to the existing element of caste based exclusion, therefore, this further exacerbated their isolation from the rest of the village and acted as the most basic barrier to their identification with the process. A sense of involvement in or ownership of the Village Planning process by this particular ST community was therefore found to be lacking (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 18, 29 and FGD with pregnant Sahariya women, Jamalpur: Day 4 in Annexure B).

The second issue that I would take up here was an instance in the village of Sironkhurd. In a discussion with the women’s group, on probing into the biggest problem faced by them, it was revealed that the only hospital being in the main block (that was 10 km away), there was no medical facility for institutional delivery available either in or around
the village. The women narrated an incident where both the mother and the child died en-route to hospital. This noteworthy problem of lack of institutional delivery services for women in spite of having been brought to the attention of the BDO, did not appear on the Village Action Plan itself. This incident in this particular village highlighted the lack of adequate involvement of women in Village Planning itself (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 19 and FGD with Women’s Group, Sironkhurd: Day 3 in Annexure B).

The question that I intend to address here by citing these two instances is: if a particular section of people in a village does not identify the issues on the Village Action Plan and if, in another village, the crucial need of a bunch of women for a maternity clinic could not make its way to this Action Plan, then what implications does such lack of ownership of the process reflected by both these cases, have on the constituents of the term ‘community?’ How does one define community whose needs are supposed to be reflected in the Action Plan and what exactly does the term entail? In other words, are the interests of an already marginalized group in the first case or those of women (who specifically in the South Asian context have known to be relatively less vocal than their male counterparts) in the second case, subsumed within the blanket term of a so called ‘community’? Community, according to me, therefore is a buzzword.

Undoubtedly, Village Planning is, by its very nature, ‘participatory’ and ‘inclusive’ in its endeavor to specifically ‘enable the most disadvantaged to take better control over their own lives and act as equal partners of the project’ (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 7). Through its BCC component, which specifically seeks to improve the lives of both women and children, the intervention ensures that the aforementioned aim is met. Yet, on the other hand, as seen in the discussion above, if one of the problems of women by not appearing on the Action Plan could not ensure service delivery, then their level of involvement in the process and sharing of benefits remains unclear. Their constitution in the term community, therefore, seems to be deceptive. Thus, when Guijt and Shah (2001) assert that the fields of participatory development and gender, despite their shared goals of social inclusion and societal transformation, have remained far apart—both in theory and practice—then they precisely point out to the same fact that despite the stated
intentions of social inclusion, participatory development initiatives in some cases do not deal well with the complexity of community differences such as gender. The term community is often naively, or in practice dealt with as a harmonious and internally equitable collective (Guijt and Shah 2001: 1) because of the connotation of ‘consensus’ and ‘needs’, that it carries (Nelson and Wright 1995\textsuperscript{30}: as cited in Mohan and Stokke 2000: 251).

Similarly, in the laudable effort that Village planning makes in paying special attention towards a balanced selection of Village Volunteers from backward and ST groups as well, if the project, on the one hand, seeks to accomplish its aim of attending to the needs of the most disadvantaged, then on the other hand, be it for reasons of the five-day process being carried out while the ST group is not present in the village or in the wake of not being able to engage the less powerful and the more powerful in the same socio-political space (of the main village, where planning activities were being carried out), the issues on the Village Action Plan could not be identified by this group. As a result, a group that is already marginalized due to certain age old rigid and caste based traditional social fissures, still remains to be excluded and it seems, therefore, that the nature of participation is such that it continues to reinforce the stratification of power that is already in place and that it should rather attempt to eliminate\textsuperscript{31}. This again underlines the bewildering aspect of a ‘single’ community. Comparing the participatory methodologies of the two traditions of PAR and PRA, Cornwall (2002: 53) suggests that unlike the former that explicitly focuses on building intensive longer term engagement with the marginalized and the excluded, the latter has traditionally been used to work with community as a whole. She states the following that precisely fits the above situation:


\textsuperscript{31}Kothari (2001) argues: “Individuals adopt discursive and embodied articulations of power that become readily accepted as cultural norms. In this way, power and inequality become normative and thus often remain unchallenged. [...] If Foucault argues, individuals subject themselves to self surveillance as they absorb wider notions of social controls, then the purpose of participatory research should be to uncover these more normalized articulations of power. In this way, power inequalities in the society and the needs and interests of the poor and marginalized can be revealed” (Kothari 2001: 145).
“Wealth or wellbeing ranking may be used to differentiate between households[...] Yet when it comes to creating consensual products such as community action plans, differentiation disappears: ‘the poor’ often become everyone or everyone is at least believed to have their best interests in mind [...] Without attention to difference however, ‘community’ consensus can all too easily lead to the exclusion of the concerns of the least vocal and most marginalized[...] Enabling the poor and excluded to empower themselves requires not only intensive engagement but also an active recognition of the relations of power involved. This seems to be strikingly lacking in strategies to simply hand over control to ‘communities’ or in promotion of rapid PRA style exercises to generate action plans” (ibid: 53, 71-72).

The essential argument made in this discussion, therefore, was to emphasize the inappropriateness of the usage of term ‘community’ in not recognizing the real concerns of the excluded, thereby leading to—what Uma Kothari calls—the reification of the existing inequalities by serving the interests of the already powerful (Kothari 2001: 145).

What is rather needed is to seek ‘Clarity through Specificity’—an approach adopted by Cohen and Uphoff (1980) in their paper that discusses participation in rural development. Stressing on the need to be absorbed in the definitional aspect of the word participation, rather than merely developing ways of thinking about it, the authors engage with rural-development participation, by elaborating on the distinction between the dimensions and contexts of participation (Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 214). They describe three different dimensions of participation: namely what kind of participation is under consideration; who is participating in it and how is participation occurring? It is this second dimension of ‘who participates’ that is crucial for the discussion in this part of the dissertation. Cohen and Uphoff suggest that the participation which most development agencies and governments these days are concerned about is that of the ‘rural poor’ or the ‘poor majority’. They assert that it is very difficult to assess their participation in any respect, if they are considered in such an aggregated mass. Instead of being a mass, they are a large and heterogeneous group (ibid: 222). They go on to suggest:

“Their [the rural poor] being considered as a group is not, indeed, something they would themselves be likely to suggest. There are significant differences in occupation, location, land, tenure, status, sex, caste, religion or tribe which are related in different ways to their poverty.
To talk about ‘the participation of the rural poor’ is to compound one complex and ambiguous term with another, even more complicated and amorphous. If we want to deal usefully with the problems of the rural poor, we need to begin making some analytical distinctions among them” (ibid: 222).

In having said so, what Cohen and Uphoff (1980) are suggesting here is not any different from the point that Guijt and Shah (2001) or Cornwall (2002) make in highlighting the heterogeneity of the community in their respective accounts. However, a reference to the work of the former was absolutely essential in this section in order to highlight the expression ‘Clarity through Specificity’, which also appears as a subtitle in their work and which clarifies very succinctly and explicitly, what exactly is needed. This expression would be referred to in the next chapter as well.

II. Problematizing Facilitation or Capacity Building

“Communities in the past have shown great capacities in both initiating and managing their own development process if provided need based and unflinching support. However development, in real sense, is a continuous process and therefore cannot be fueled by external support over a long term basis. Hence it becomes inevitable to build the capacities of the people such that they gradually become aware of their issues and take charge on the basis of enhanced understanding about their social realities. Having said that, however, social realities are far more complex and dynamic in nature and therefore requires the facilitators’ continuous presence in the community” (SDF, First Quarterly Report quarterly: 4).

“There are always two kinds of issues – one that can be addressed at the grassroots level itself and second that requires outside facilitation support” (ibid: 6).

In this section I would take up a specific and one of the most crucial issues related to the Service Action component of the intervention. For this, I would refer back to a point that was briefly mentioned in the previous section– that it was not uncommon for the villagers not to have BPL cards and Labor cards that provide access to the NREG scheme of the Government. This was specially the case in the Sahariya hamlets of Sunaura and
Jamalpur. In a particular case of the village Bhadauna\textsuperscript{32}, certain Sahariyas mentioned that although they had brought this up with the Pradhan 10-12 months ago, no action had been taken yet. As a response to this, the field coordinator present there encouraged them to collectively go to the block level and demand for the same (FGD with pregnant Sahariya women, Jamalpur: Day 4 and Informal Discussion with the Women’s Group, Badhauna: Day 5 in Annexure B).

Therefore, in spite of the fact that the Government of India has an elaborate array of social welfare schemes for the deprived, these groups were found to be unlikely to access them and were also very rarely realizing their rights to do so (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 30). It is important to mention here that as it was observed, in many cases, the young Village Volunteers as well as the Pradhans themselves did not possess adequate knowledge about the various government schemes that are specifically meant for the socially excluded groups. In such a scenario doesn’t it become important for the intervention, in order to prove what it can accomplish for STs, to press for speedy sanctioning of ration cards and employment cards and encourage the community to advocate for access to other schemes as a step towards addressing livelihood issues? Doesn’t it become important for Village Planning to educate not just the community members but also the Volunteers and the Pradhans on these schemes? (ibid: 30) This is certainly not to discount the other impacts that the intervention has generated in issues related to service delivery. As far as the increase in the enrollment in primary schools, repair and installation of hand pumps or another important issue of scaling up of Birth Registration is concerned, Village Planning, by making people aware of the need to demand for the above, has made remarkable improvement across all the three blocks in Lalitpur where the intervention has been implemented (as noted at the start of this chapter). According to me, however, in addition to other such matters (that are in no sense any less vital), it is of utmost importance for people to be able to take complete charge of their lives, that they

\textsuperscript{32} Apart from the 4 villages that were researched, this fifth village Badhauna was visited to especially witness the Mini Planning exercise. Mini Planning as mentioned before, is a three-day process that takes place in villages, already under Village Planning, in order to take stock of old issues and identify new issues. This makes it even more essential that this need of labor and ration cards that was identified in the Village Planning phase itself should have been taken care of by the service delivery component of the intervention.
possess the necessary knowledge about issues that particularly revolve around their livelihoods. This becomes even more indispensable in a case, where the people in question are the ones that are already marginalized and need to see changes that are most obvious. Whether or not these needs are met from the side of service providers is definitely another matter that involves its own set of weaknesses and complications. Despite of taking that into account, it nevertheless remains extremely crucial in such a scheme of things for people to be sensitized about their own rights and if they already are (as in the case above, where the villagers were aware of the need for labor and ration cards), then it becomes even more important for a process ensuring the fulfillment of such rights, to be facilitated.

In order to better situate my arguments in the aforementioned case, I would now briefly discuss here, a particular work by Von Kotze (1998) and draw on some of the arguments that she makes therein. Von Kotze presents an intriguing account of having participated in one of the PRA workshops with villagers in rural Mozambique, who had returned back to their country from years in exile under the hard living conditions of the neighboring countries. Being part of a larger disaster mitigation training programme that aimed at shifting the agency thinking away from short term interventions such as aid and relief to long term sustainable development, the workshop itself was conceived with the idea of assessing existing capacities and urgent vulnerabilities of the villagers in order to eventually initiate a planning process to support existing local resilience. She demonstrates how, through a participatory activity of time-line oral storytelling exercise which aimed to reveal the history of the village, the villagers not only evoked vivid images of the devastating effects of droughts on environment and social formations, but also came up with a host of community based mitigation tools by narrating ingenious ways of survival— in particular by recounting a strand of drought-resistant millet that was their means of survival one year (Von Kotze 1998)\(^3\). Following this, she acknowledges the storytelling exercise as being an interesting process that revealed a lot about local

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\(^3\) The page numbers for this article have not been cited due to the fact that only the HTML version of the article (without page numbers) was accessible under the following link: Source: EBSCOhost: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=114&sid=7baeb1dc-d1f1-4a1c-8c82-e6751429027b%40sessionmgr106
conditions and livelihood strategies and yet calls it a failure, in terms of it being a process of critical learning. The reason as to why she does that would become clear through the following lines. She mentions:

“Although the narrative had introduced decisions and inventions that secured people’s livelihood and kept them from plunging into crisis and dependency as a result of bigger social and political movements, these inventions were not highlighted as crucial turning points, or as the mechanisms of survival [...] Instead of validating crucial knowledge and ways of knowing, or searching for links and connections, causes and effects, we left the process as little more than a string of anecdotes[...] As participants, we could have constructed an action plan for local people to regain their voice in the broader context of their country[...]. Such a focus [a focus on poverty] would have taken us beyond looking at the experiences of local people, toward looking at those who make policies and implement decisions that have an impact on their lives” (ibid).

While, on the one hand, referring to the top-down/outside-insider monologue that typifies the new development paradigm of Robert Chambers\(^{34}\), and in saying the above on the other, the underlying argument that she makes is, that if, as participants, she and her colleagues only allowed the villagers to talk about their experiences and themselves chose to ‘remain silent’, then this also led to a mere monologue– albeit in the opposite direction, wherein–as she asserts–teachers (the authority) are the local people who expound their lessons on the objects who are the outsider-learners. She calls into question, the definitional underpinnings of the word ‘sharing’ (that appears in the expression “sharing of people’s knowledge and experience “, most often used in PRA literature by Chambers) by strongly advocating that sharing not only means ‘airing’, or ‘giving voices to’ but also carries the connotation of an exchange, a dialogue, which she rather finds to be present in the Freirean concept of ‘Dialogics’ (ibid). In the light of the aforementioned, apart from herself and her fellow participants in the workshop being ‘facilitators’, she also underlines their role as ‘educators’. This role of educators and dialogue that she stresses becomes clear when she further says the following:

\(^{34}\) She makes a reference to the following three papers by PRA expert Robert Chambers:
“At the end of the PRA, villagers decided to reintroduce old cropping patterns, and to plant those cereals which they had remembered as reliable under drought conditions. They suggested that if there was to be any aid, they would ask for seeds for such crops. But because there had been no dialogue about the world economy and their place within it, because their own limited horizon had not been expanded through a contribution to learning by the outsiders, they could not plan for the long and hard struggle it would take to procure such seeds: there were insufficient stocks and no one to sponsor them, and they did not have the language or strategic tools in order to lobby” (ibid).

According to the author, passing on this knowledge to the villagers would have helped them to understand the link between global, regional and local systems and to make better decisions with longer term impact. As educators–she suggests–they could have used their access to information about broader socio-political and economic issues thereby bringing their understanding of ‘the world out there’. They could have problematized and explored local experiences and questioned and analyzed their understanding within a broader context (ibid). This point about an educator giving away, to the villagers, information regarding socio-political and economic issues is crucial to the analysis of the arguments presented in this section of the chapter.

As mentioned previously too, it is certainly not my intention here, to fully incorporate the above discussion by Von Kotze, in an attempt to completely rework the same for the purpose of analyzing the case in question. Doing so would not be entirely fitting mainly due to the fact that, if in her overall account, the aspect of ‘sharing’ comes to be contested when confined to a mere act of ‘airing’ or ‘giving voices to’, then the same would not be the case with Village Planning, which, in addition to stressing upon the ‘voices of the poor’35 and the ‘immense potentialities of people to plan’(SDF, First Quarterly report: 6) also recognizes the need of ‘building capacities’, providing ‘need based support’ or ‘outside facilitation’ (see the emphasis in the quotes in the beginning of this section). Also different between the case under consideration and Von Kotze’s account of herself and her colleagues are the following: If by not focusing on poverty, the latter could not

35 “The culture of silence prevailing in the society needs to be broken and voices of the poor ought to be heard. Therefore the beginning had to be made and that too with a special focus on women, children and disadvantaged” (SDF, Annual Progress Report: 2).
look beyond the ‘experiences of local people towards looking at those who make policies and implement decisions that have an impact on their lives’, then Village Planning, not only brings together the villagers (the usage of the word community has been avoided on purpose) and the service providers/policy makers on a common platform but also, through its convergent approach, seeks to integrate the intervention with the government’s frameworks; if as participants, they did not ‘construct an action plan for local people to regain their voice in the broader context of their country’, then–quite literally too–Village Planning, through its Village Action Plan component, lets the villagers assess their own needs, problems and solutions in order to create this plan for themselves and therefore at least provides a scope for the facilitator to establish the links, connections, causes and effects.

Despite these dissimilarities between the two, what nonetheless remains to be thoroughly understood from Von Kotze’s account and is relevant for the discussion here is her emphasis on the practitioner also being an educator, when she says the following:

‘As someone who is in a position to make choices, and in my role as educator, can I possibly study the life-stories of people without relating their personal hardships to the broader economic, political and social conditions?’ (ibid)

In the particular case mentioned above, when the villagers mentioned that they had not received labor and ration cards even after the matter had already been brought up with the Pradhan about a year ago and when the field coordinator recommended them to go the block level, it was observed that they were not too keen on doing the same, perhaps suggesting a sense of helplessness (Informal Discussion with the women’s group, Badhauna: Day 5 in Annexure B). In such a case, the role of the coordinator, instead of being limited to asking them to go to the block level should have rather gone beyond the same in following up the matter with the Pradhan himself. And if, the Pradhan or the Village Volunteers themselves had either not followed up the same at their end, then in pushing them towards doing the same as their duty or in case they themselves did not have adequate knowledge about other government schemes meant for the deprived (which as stated before was very often the case), then in educating them on the same. All of this, in an endeavor to remind people about the importance of such rights.
The argument that is being made here in this particular case is that if Village Planning does emphasize the importance of giving need based support to people, then this facilitative role of village planning should have kick-started the processing of these ration and labor cards that provide access to government schemes related to the basic necessities of food and employment and should have focused on helping people (be it the marginalized, the Volunteers or Pradhans) to realize the benefits that are available to them in the form of various government policies. By virtue of concentrating on such issues related to people’s livelihoods, this facilitative function of Village Planning would also encompass an educative dimension that would help place the local conditions within a broader socio-economic and political framework, thereby bringing to the people—in Von Kotze’s terms– the understanding of the world out there.

Therefore even if it has been argued, on the one hand, that as opposed to the case in Von Kotze’s account, Village Planning is not just about giving voices to people, but also about facilitating, supporting and building capacities, then on the other hand, my intention in simultaneously underlining in the intervention, a need for Von Kotze’s educative function, is to problematize this very facilitative role of the intervention itself. Capacity building and facilitation, then, also come across to me as buzzwords. Undeniably so, the demand generation strategy and Village Action Plan are the defining elements of this facilitative role of the intervention. But this facilitative role can be fully realized only if the educative role explored above is inculcated within its operative framework. Again, behavioral change strategy is also educative in its approach. The meaning of educative, however, should not be restricted to just that level, but should also involve in its ambit a larger educative function, which brings positive changes in people’s livelihoods and which—in Cleaver’s words—eventually improves the conditions of the most vulnerable materially (Cleaver 2001:36). This supportive or facilitative role would come to actualize its true meaning only in being used a strategy for social change (ibid: 36). Without understanding the non-project nature of people’s lives and the complex livelihood interlinkages that make an impact in one area likely to be felt in others (Giddens 1984
and Long 1992: as cited in Cleaver 2001: 38), the meaning of the notion of capacity building or facilitating remains unfulfilled.

III. Problematizing ‘Participation’

“The VP phase concentrates on identifying village level issues, mobilizing village opinion on these issues, establishing forums for taking up these issues, presenting these issues in form of an action plan, sharing this action plan with the government and setting up accountability and community based monitoring mechanisms” (SDF, Second Quarterly Report: 39).

“Convergence strategies rely more on local resources available and active participation of the communities in the implementation and monitoring of project plans. This results in enabling the communities, particularly the most disadvantaged, to take better control over their own lives and act as equal partners of the project” (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 7).

“The Village Planning approach to community development is a magical process of being with the community for five days and nights, engaging the community in empowering processes and approaches, engaging the community in the process of critical analysis and reflection, assisting the community in analyzing their realities and possibilities envisaged therein[...]/” (SDF, Second Quarterly Report: 18).

“The project intends to challenge the present top-down planning process by demonstrating a much viable bottom-up planning approach which ensures the ownership of planned intervention thereby guaranteeing the sustainability of impact” (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 6).

In this section, I would finally make an attempt to problematize the word participation itself.

As mentioned in one of the previous chapters, through its convergent approach, Village Planning seeks to integrate itself with the government at all levels of village, block as well as district. At the village level, the intervention seeks to integrate the Volunteers and

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CBOs with the various government frontline workers such as the Pradhan, ANM, AWW, school teachers etc. Also, the fifth day of the intervention itself ends with formally handing over the Village Action Plan to the Pradhan. While the intervention and its endeavor to seek this convergence should be acknowledged, it was found that although there was significant convergence between the work of government frontline workers such as AWW and ANM and that of Volunteers and CBOs, the convergent efforts towards linking these newly established user groups with the PRI and the Pradhan could not be translated into real coordination between the two. It is this problem that I would take up in the following discussion.

As part of the model of PRI, villages in India have six working committees that cater to the various sectors of Health, Education, Water, Construction Development and Planning. The functioning of these six village committees as well as an active involvement of the various committee members in Village Planning were found to be one of the most important factors determining service delivery at village level. Equally crucial for the same was the role of the Pradhan and his participation level in the intervention (Oving, N. et al 2007: 25). The centrality of the figure of Pradhan in the local governance system stems from the fact that he oversees the functioning of the village committees. Singh (1994) notes the importance of Pradhans in India’s Village Life by stating that Pradhans play a crucial role in all welfare activities of the village and serve as a connecting link between the villagers and the bureaucracy and other agencies associated with development activities (Singh 1994: 2). He further points out:

“[...] some Pradhans are more influential and powerful than others. They may be well connected to the political bosses. Their access to the seat of power and information within the block and outside, enable them to develop linkages and networks [...]” (ibid: 2).

Despite this key role that Pradhans normally assume in the working of the village and despite the need of their active involvement in Village Planning to ensure service delivery, the Pradhans had painfully low levels of knowledge about the villages they represented. In all three villages, save for Construction committee (which is known to deal with considerable amounts of money), all committees were found to be defunct and the Pradhans openly admitted that most committee members do not even know which
committees they were members of. Furthermore, the Pradhans’ knowledge of Village Planning was found to be superficial and did not extend to any knowledge of the issues on Action Plan (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 25-26).

On the other hand, government frontline workers as well as newly established actors such as the Village Volunteers often had access to crucial information (ibid: 26). This was a direct outcome of the enormous amount of the village statistical data that is collected by the Volunteers and user committees such as the women’s groups and adolescent girls’ groups during the household surveys that both actors conduct in the wake of the five-day Village Planning process.

This gives rise to an ironic situation. On the one hand, in spite of the networks that they establish by virtue of being the elected heads of the committees at the village level and by acting as a link between the villagers and the bureaucracy, the Pradhans did not have access to crucial statistical information that would otherwise be expected of them, if they are to communicate the villagers’ demands to the block level. On the other hand, the ones who did possess such information lacked the official capacity to translate the availability of this information into a process that could ensure consistent follow up (it needs to be mentioned, however, that, albeit unofficially, CBOs and Volunteers in many cases brought about many positive changes related to both service delivery and behavior, be it by assisting the AWWs in extending their services or by mobilizing the villagers to prevent numerous instances of child marriage and to press for the appointment of teaching staff in schools). One such instance deserves special mentioning. At one of the meetings of the BTF\textsuperscript{37}, it was observed that while the Pradhans themselves were absent, the Volunteers and community members of the various villages of that particular block did not in anyway participate or raise any issue (BTF Meeting: Day 6 in Annexure B). In such a case, the presence of the Pradhans was necessary to build relationships between the village and the block, and to therefore make them upwardly accountable, hence ensuring a direct follow up of the concerned issues (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 27).

\textsuperscript{37} We attended one of the meetings of the Block Taskforce in Talbehat Block and met with and interviewed the various government officials such as the BDO, ABSA and ADO.
Hence, to ensure effective participation, it becomes absolutely necessary for the Pradhans and the members of these six committees to be explicitly and publicly involved in Village Planning. If the committees are defunct, it becomes essential to revitalize them and to educate both the Pradhans and the committee members on the various government welfare schemes whose benefits the villagers are entitled to, so that together with the Volunteers they have the knowledge about how to achieve access to these schemes and can also share the same with the villagers during Village Planning (this very well relates to the argument on the educative function presented in the previous section). If the Pradhans lack adequate knowledge about their respective villages, then it becomes important that they too are provided with the related statistical information collected during the five-day planning process (ibid: 26).

The argument that is being made here is that if the functioning of newly established actors such as Village Volunteers, CBTs and CBOs is streamlined with the pre-existing government mechanism at the village level, then this is likely to have two important consequences. Firstly, parallelism of roles could be avoided (ibid: 34). In other words, the duplication of the efforts of these user groups and actors in the local governance system could be prevented. Citing an example from the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, James Manor from IDS, Sussex notes that such integration between ‘user committees’ and ‘elected multi purpose councils’ is feasible. He describes how the government of this particular state has turned single sector user committees into single subject sub-committees of village governments and has thereby streamlined the local decision making process. Instead of having two different local institutions that duplicate labor, the two have been fused (Manor 2004: 199-200). Secondly, streamlining the activities of user groups in accordance with the village Panchayats would simultaneously help strengthen

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38 We did not find this to be entirely impossible. For instance, in Sironkhurd, the village volunteer had succeeded in arranging a special meeting of the Education Committee. It was the season of school re-opening and admissions and the meeting agenda was to discuss the denial of school admission to children without birth certificates. The Panchayat Secretary was also invited so that he could facilitate the issuing of the certificates from the block level on the spot (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 33)

39 As far as our findings regarding these existing lacunae in the PRI are concerned, it must be mentioned that in a meeting with Project Coordinator of Sarathi, it was revealed that an initiative to begin training for Pradhans and the six committees was due in the next phase of Village Planning.
the existing local governance system (which by no means is in the best shape and therefore needs to be reinvigorated) as well as engender a culture of participation there (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 34). It is important to note that the nature of participation in that case would not be similar to dealing with participation as a technocratic exercise, but would have an element of political analysis to it (Greig et al 2007: 238). This would become clearer through the following.

If the six Panchayat committees under the PRI model are strengthened and used as an appropriate forum to follow up sectoral issues on the Village Action Plan (Ovung, N. et al 2007: 34), then these service delivery issues on the Action Plan that are related to socio-economic aspect of development would enter into a political arena or a democratic framework, where the likelihood of those services being delivered is enhanced. If persistent efforts are made in the direction of enabling people to build pressure on the Panchayati Raj Institutions to provide follow up to the demands that are raised through the Action Plan, then this gives rise to a situation, where socio-economic development can be brought about by political action (Greig et al 2007: 239). The handbook for trainers on the Panchayati Raj Model in India illustrates such a potential, by describing how the villagers of a particular village in Tamil Nadu could influence the PRI decision making by expressing open dissent towards the setting up of a distillery in the area (by an influential businessman), which was likely to deplete the groundwater level, affect village drinking water sources and cause air pollution. (Jain and Polman 2003: 16-17). The essential argument that is being made in this section is reflected in the conclusion that Jain and Polman (2003) come up with in their case study:

“It may be concluded that the presence of elected PRI representatives is essential for giving voices to people” (ibid: 17).

And for people to be able to make their voices heard, this political aspect of development policy is to be seen together with the social (Gaventa 2003). These two aspects of development—the socio-economic and the political—are brought together in the twin concept of ‘Citizenship Participation’ and ‘Social Citizenship’ that feature in the respective works of Gaventa (2003) and Cornwall and Gaventa (2001). John Gaventa argues that linking participation to political sphere means rethinking the ways in which
participation has often been conceived and carried out in the context of development (Gaventa and Valderama 1999, as cited in Gaventa 2003: 3)\(^40\). He mentions that there is in the field of development studies, on one side, the drive for ‘participatory development’ that has focused on direct forms of participation throughout the project cycle (needs assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), as well as on the importance of local knowledge and understanding as a basis for local action. A large range of participatory tools and methodologies stem from this tradition, he suggests. At the same time there exists work on political participation that–he states–grows out of political science and governance debates and includes questions dealing with legitimate representation, systems of public accountability, rights education, awareness building and political mobilization among others. The important point that he then goes on to highlight is that, whereas both these traditions have underestimated the issues that either focuses on, both have something to learn from each other. He brings the two together in the concept of ‘citizenship’, which–according to him–links the concept of participation in the political, social and community spheres. Entering into the realm of the ‘rights based approach’ to development, he draws on the definition of participation as a right ‘that can be seen as a positive freedom, which enables citizens to realize their social rights’\(^41\) (Gaventa 2003: 3-4). The idea of gaining citizenship and rights through agency is the central idea that informs his analysis.

This right based approach to development is further extrapolated by Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) in their work ‘From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers’, where they assert that through the practice of ‘active/social citizenship’ or the exercise of this very notion of agency, citizens become the makers and shapers of their own development. They argue:


“[…]the concept of ‘social citizenship’, that has often underpinned considerations of social welfare, should be expanded to include not only concepts of social rights, but also of social responsibilities exercised through self action, and of social accountability achieved through direct forms of democratic governance” (ibid: 20).

Further, Cornwall (2002) observes that these forms of direct democratic practice not only shift the boundaries of development beyond the project or programme, but they also highlight the need of focusing beyond ‘softer’ institutions for participation to the ‘harder’ apparatus of legislature and governance (Cornwall 2002: 66).

Coming back to the issue at hand, the argument being made is, that it is commendable that what are referred to as the ‘community members’ themselves are sensitized directly to take charge of their own development as well as that of the ‘community’ as a whole (be it by becoming Village Volunteers or being members of CBOs) and are given responsibilities to achieve this end. It is also creditable to recognize the attempt of Village Planning in ensuring that the intervention is integrated with the existing government framework at all levels. Its convergent strategy of formally handing over the Village Action Plan to the Village Panchayat is to be duly recognized. In order to make this convergence reach its ultimate fruition, it is also needed, however, to beef up the existing system of local governance at the first level of the village by making more conscious and more strenuous efforts in entrusting people with these responsibilities in their capacities as citizens (where the definition of citizen corresponds with the concept of citizenship as defined by Cornwall and Gaventa). Such an attempt would automatically translate into the assurance that the positive facets of both—of the intervention as well as of the efforts of reinvigorating the spirits of PRI and its members—come to be combined together in the best possible way. The coming together of the Pradhan and newly established actors such as the youth in CBOs and young Volunteers would ensure that the latter can righteously channelize their zeal and at the same time capitalize on the official capacity of the former to make it more likely that the demands that they help identify are being met through efficient service delivery. Similarly, discussing the issues on the Village Action Plan in the Panchayat meetings would provide a democratic framework for the issues to be solved. Enabling such convergence is most needed at the village level
itself in order to enliven, guarantee and sustain this political arena, where—as both Cornwall and Gaventa argue—people have the ‘right’ to participate as well as the ‘freedom’ to participate (Sen 2000). Without this political dimension, therefore, the true meaning of this third buzzword ‘participation’ remains unrealized. It does convey something but not what it ought to.

In the next section, I would make an attempt to engage with the buzzword participation within the theoretical framework of Laclau’s concepts that were taken up in the previous chapter. This discussion which seeks to integrate the two, would be carried out in the broader context of Village Planning and would be ultimately linked to the arguments that were made in the section above.

**Integrating Participation and Laclau’s Theoretical Framework**

Laclau’s concepts of constitutive distortion, incarnation, concealment, equivalence, absent fullness of community and floating and empty signifiers that were covered under the four sub-sections of the chapter on theoretical framework would now be revived in the following discussion. To begin with, I would evoke the previously mentioned argument that Laclau makes by reiterating Saussure’s ideas: that there are no positive terms in language. There are only differences. Something is what it is only through its differential relations to something else.

The motivation behind Village Planning comes across in the following:

“*Participatory approaches hence are people centered and as such look at people as solutions to the problem rather than as passive beneficiaries*” (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 6).

“*Convergence strategies rely more on local resources available and active participation of the communities in the implementation and monitoring of project plans*” (ibid: 7).

In the first statement, the idea of participation in the expression ‘participatory approaches’ defines itself as being different from a world where approaches are not
people centered and where people are considered passive beneficiaries. In other words, if one applies to this case, Saussure’s argument of everything in language being different, then ‘participatory approaches’ here posit themselves as being different from the ‘government schemes’ that lack ‘community participation and ownership’ (as discussed in the second chapter). It must be recalled that the vision with which the intervention defines itself rests on the belief that ‘lop-sided development methodologies ignore the real needs of the people and the not so visible issues of the community’. It is in challenging the present ‘top-down planning process’ that it claims to possess a much ‘viable bottoms-up planning process’ which ensures both community participation as well as ownership. In Laclau’s words, ‘participation’ as a signifying object, differentiates itself from all of the above conditions of ‘lop-sided development methodologies, ‘top-down development agenda’ etc. In other words, this term participation becomes an incarnating body that incarnates a world where people plan their own development. Such a world that is incarnated by the term participation, then, is what Laclau calls ‘fullness of the community’. The moment participation starts becoming this fullness of the community, it starts transforming from a mere word into a discourse. This world, where people take charge of their own development, is firstly necessary for participation to actualize its meaning. Secondly just because the whole and sole purpose of the presence of this world is only for the sake of ‘participation’ to be able to realize its meaning, it is also absent or illusionary. In such a relationship, the actual meaning of the term participation is therefore dislocated and this dislocation is concealed. In other words, the inevitable schism that Laclau refers to becomes apparent here: that in defining itself as something different, participation doesn’t have a content of its own but is nonetheless deformed at the same time.

Also, as one sees in the quotes above (in the box at the start of this section), it becomes clear that in evoking the world, where people become empowered by owning the development process, the term participation, therefore, also comes to be associated with other (buzz)words such as ownership, accountability and empowerment in a relationship of equivalence. Because the incarnating body of participation as well as each of these other buzzwords in the chain of equivalence merely stand for the ‘absent fullness of the
community’ of a world where people are not passive beneficiaries but make their own choices, the purely privative character of the identity of each of these words is weakened. Evoking over here the discussion made in the theory chapter, on ‘floating and empty signifiers’ where participation was deliberately used as an example (instead of the usage of the signifier of democracy used by Laclau), one can also say that by floating these buzzwords in the chain of equivalence, their meaning is being emptied. It must be noted, however, that this purely privative or particular identity of the incarnating body of participation and that of each of these buzzwords—as Laclau says—is only weakened and not completely lost. And that is exactly what ought to be revived. That essentially has been the argument here.

It is now time to recall one of Laclau’s most important propositions which he makes soon after suggesting the above and which—as mentioned previously in the theory chapter too—is crucial to the discussion here:

“The only thing we can say is that the relationship between particular and equivalential identities is unstable: everything depends on what function—representing a content within the community or representing the latter as an absent fullness—will prevail” (Laclau 1997: 304).

What is being suggested here is that, it is the equivalential identity of participation, empowerment, accountability and ownership—in pointing out to the absent fullness of the world where people chart their own development—that seems to prevail. What remains to be realized is the true meaning or the particular character of the identity of participation and of each of these other buzzwords. In the context of this section where the issue on the need of adequate convergence between Village Planning and the local governance system was taken up, this privative identity of the term participation could be made to prevail only by restoring to this participation, the element of ‘political analysis’ and ‘agency’ (as espoused by Gaventa and Cornwall). Laclau’s hypothesis of ‘the very assumption of the supposed ‘zero level’ of the ideological of a pure extra-discursive reality itself being a misconception par excellence’ stems from his argument that at the very root of all ideological processes lies the double movement of incarnation and deformation, that make the very operation of a supposed extra-ideological reality dependent on
mechanisms belonging to the ideological realm. If it was based on this constitutive distortion, that an attempt was made here to show that participation refers to a world where people plan their development, then it is through this very principle of constitutive distortion itself that the purely privative nature of participation can be restored, i.e. by making participation to incarnate this element of political analysis— a discussion that has already been carried out above in detail. Recapitulating what was said above, in tandem with all the innovations (be it in developing the unique component of Action Plan or in founding new user groups) that the development project brings about in order to let people plan their development, if simultaneous efforts are made to toughen up the PRI system at the level of village itself, then it becomes all the more probable for the demands on the Action Plan to navigate their way up to other levels of government (of block, district and the state), thereby ensuring that the plan is ‘shared with the government’. Only then would accountability be ensured. Only then would grassroots participation in the community and social spheres come to be linked with the participation in the political. Only then would participation cross the threshold of the softer institutions to reach the harder apparatus of governance. And therefore, only then would people get a chance to exercise their agency and be able to ‘take better control’ over their lives, be empowered and become makers and shapers of their own development, thereby guaranteeing ownership. The privative identity of each of the buzzwords would therefore be restored.

As mentioned previously too, the last chapter would seek to synthesize what has been said through this chapter, through the theoretical background by Foucault (1990) and Gardner and Lewis (2000) and through the hypothesis that was put forward in this dissertation.

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42 Brock and Cornwall (2005) suggest the same when they say that instead of abandoning the buzzwords such as participation, empowerment and poverty reduction, one should rather make an attempt to recuperate their meanings through a similar strategy of using chains of equivalence that links these words with other words to reassert the meanings that have gone into abeyance: “In configuration with words like social justice, redistribution and solidarity, there is little place for talk about participation as involving users as consumers, nor about poor people being empowered through the marketization of services that were once their basic right” (Brock and Cornwall 2005: 18).
CHAPTER 6: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

If one goes back to Foucault’s argument on discourse that was made earlier in this dissertation, one would be reminded that he rejects the idea of there being a counter discourse for every discourse. Discourses are, for him, discontinued segments operating in the field of force relations. They are a multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies and it is this distribution that—as he argues—must be reconstructed: with things said and those concealed, with the shifts and reutilizations for identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes (Foucault 1990).

Applying this Foucauldian discourse analysis to the specific case of development, when Gardner and Lewis (2000) stress upon the fluid nature of discourses within development, then it is this definition of discourses by Foucault—of them being ‘tactile elements operating in the field of force relations’—that they work with. When they talk about how the task of deconstructing particular aspects of development discourse helps problematize dominant paradigms and opens the way for alternative discourses through the revelation of an apparently objective reality as a construct, then they seem to be referring to the same idea of ‘reconstruction of the distribution’ that Foucault refers to.

In this paper, I have made an attempt to adopt this theoretical approach on ‘Discourses’ by Foucault, that has been applied time and again in various works in the literature on participatory development (including Gardner and Lewis (2000), Cornwall and Brock (2001), Hailey, John (2001) among others). This would become clear through the following discussion.

The focus in the previous chapter was on the three aspects of participation in development—‘community’, ‘facilitation or capacity building’ and ‘participation’. In three different experiential contexts, each of these aspects was problematized. They were problematized because it was contended that they are buzzwords. It was hypothesized

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that buzzwords are never neutral and that their usage allows certain meanings to flourish and others to become barely possible to think with. I would recall each of these three buzzwords that were problematized in the previous chapter. I would first begin with participation only briefly, as it was dealt with shortly before.

As it was discussed, in referring to a world where people are given control over their development process from which they had been traditionally excluded and in thereby evoking a picture where they participate in analysis, planning and action (Chambers 1997), the buzzword participation does convey something. It was asserted, however, that without addressing the political dynamics of participation, the word cannot actualize its real or purely privative meaning. Participation in the form of ‘Citizenship Participation’ is needed.

If the level of involvement of the Sahariyas and a group of women suggested that the two groups continued to be marginalized, then their inclusion in participation was questioned. While using the word community, certain very important things go unnoticed. The word evokes images of meeting people’s real needs and widespread participation at grassroots level. Community maps and striving for single community action plans meant for the entire community are the other manifestations of this buzzword that sustain these images. These seem to be, however, signs of simplification that create a certain sense of enthusiasm for the cooperative and harmonious ideal promised by the imagery of community (Guijt and Shah 2001: 7-8). As discussed in the previous chapter, however, despite the intended special focus of Village Planning on the disadvantaged on the one hand, based on gender differences and existing forms of social hierarchies, the exclusion of a certain section of society that is supposed to belong to this very ‘community’, on the other hand, continues to caste doubts about such widespread usage of the word itself. As Cohen and Uphoff (1980) suggest, dealing with the problems of the rural poor, therefore, calls for certain analytical distinction to be made. The question of who is included in community and who is not should be raised. ‘Clarity through Specificity’ is needed.
In spite of there being a provision of special government welfare schemes for the deprived that could make a difference to their lives, certain groups did not avail themselves of the same and did not realize their rights to access them. The Volunteers and the Pradhans themselves often showed lack of awareness regarding the same. By facilitating the generation of demand among the villagers, Village Planning does enhance service delivery. By making people aware of their own problems and issues, it intends to build their capacities. People still need to be sensitized about their rights and issues surrounding their livelihoods still remain to be addressed. Critical information related to broader socio-political and economic issues needs to be made available in an endeavor to be able to relate to those aspects and modalities around which the social, political and economic lives of the people are construed. The word facilitating or capacity building leaves certain crucial matters unattended. The educative dimension of bringing the ‘understanding of the world out there’ (Von Kotze, 1998) is needed.

Community evokes widespread participation, but doesn’t convey ‘clarity through specificity’. Participation does point out to a world where development of the people doesn’t lie in the hands of lop-sided top-down government schemes, but doesn’t convey that there is political analysis to it. Capacity building does recognize the fact, that because development cannot be driven by external support over a long term basis, need based support has to be provided to the people in order that they gradually become aware of their own issues and can have an enhanced understanding of their social realities; but at the same time, in certain cases, doesn’t give a sense of the fact that an educative facet of capacity building has to bring an enhanced understanding of these realities. Community, capacity building and participation as buzzwords are, therefore, certainly not neutral. They advertently allow only certain meanings to flourish and others to become barely possible to think with.

In hypothesizing that these buzzwords are biased in nature, an attempt was made to accomplish the very aim of this thesis, which has been to pay attention to the way in which these three development buzzwords had come to be used within the particular framework of the Village Planning Intervention. In doing so, my intention has been to
work with Foucault’s definition of discourse. It has been to follow, within the context of this paper, the same Foucauldian approach that was adopted by Gardner and Lewis in treating the discourses within ‘Development’ as fluid: i.e. instead of perceiving development as internally homogeneous, looking at development as a discourse with multiple and ever changing realities. Foucault argues that discourses exhibit tactical polyvalence and must be seen as a multiplicity of discontinued segments or blocks operating in the field of force relations that come into play in various strategies and it is this distribution that must be reconstructed: with things said and those concealed, with the shifts and reutilizations for identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. In the light of the argument that Foucault makes on how power and knowledge come together in a discourse, it is extremely important to pay attention to the word ‘include’ used by him in the aforementioned statement, as it is suggestive of the fact that ‘identical’ formulas for ‘contrary objectives’ are inherently present in such a distribution and that is precisely how it becomes possible for a reverse discourse to emerge within the same strategy. The only task—as Foucault seems to suggest—is to reconstruct this distribution. In showing that the usage of buzzwords community, capacity building and participation doesn’t allow the respective meanings of ‘clarity through specificity’, ‘educative dimension of facilitation’ and ‘citizenship participation’ to flourish, an attempt was made, in this paper—in Foucault’s words—to reconstruct this very distribution of discourses, with things said and those concealed, with the enunciations required, that it comprises.\(^4\) In other words, if Lewis and Gardner apply this task of Foucauldian reconstruction to the discourse on development in an endeavor to deconstruct particular aspects of development, which—according to them—helps ‘problematize’ dominant paradigms by revealing objective reality as a construct, then, based on certain personal impressions of a participatory development project of Village Planning, an attempt had been made in this thesis, to ‘problematize’ these three buzzwords in the field of participatory development that were deployed in the development intervention. Behind this task of problematization, was the intention to deconstruct in the particular experiential context of Village Planning,

\(^4\) Referring to this argument by Foucault on discourses and their tactical polyvalence, which they apply to their work, Brock and Cornwall (2005) argue that: “Recognizing the strategic reversibility of discourse is important, as it helps us to recognize that alternative ways of worldmaking can take shape even out of the most apparently closed discursive spaces” (Brock and Cornwall 2005: 18).
three aspects that have otherwise also been debated and contested within the field of
development. Behind this intention of deconstruction (or Foucault’s ‘reconstruction’) has
been the firm conviction in Foucault’s assertion that shifts and reutilizations for identical
formulas for contrary objectives pre-exist in the distribution in which discourses come
into play in various strategies, thereby making possible, the emergence of reverse
discourses within the same strategy. I would reaffirm this conviction by concluding that
Clarity through Specificity, Facilitation with an educative function and Citizenship
Participation exist within the same strategy as community, capacity building and participation do.
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ANNEXURE A: Original Research Methodology adopted for the Primary Research (Conducted within the Internship Framework) (Ovung, N. et al, 2007: 8-10).

In order to answer the three research questions the team undertook ten days of field visit in Lalitpur. We visited the four villages mentioned above, which were selected on the following criteria:

1) One village where Village Planning had not taken place (Dashrara, Bar Block);
2) One village where Village Planning was carried out in the first phase of implementation, July – October 2005, and Response Planning had not taken place (Sironkhurd, Jakhaura Block);
3) One village where Village Planning was carried out in the first phase and Response Planning had taken place (Sunaura, Talbehat Block); and
4) One village where Village Planning was carried out in the second phase, November 2005 – January 2006, and where social exclusion was a concern (Jamalpur, Talbehat Block).

The team used quantitative as well as qualitative data to evaluate the three research questions. For quantitative data, we were dependent on reports provided by Sarathi and UNICEF, in particular the Annual and Quarterly reports and the Re-assessment Analysis Report. For qualitative data we used a range of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, including semi-structured individual interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and dream-mapping. The table below records all qualitative data collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRA Tool Used</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Semi-structured individual interview | • Sarathi staff members (Lalitpur)  
• *Pradhans* (Sironkhurd, Jamalpur, Dashrara)  
• ASHA workers (Sunaura, Sironkhurd)  
• Lady Health Visitor (Jamalpur)  
• *Anganwadi* Workers (Sunaura, Jamalpur, Dashrara)  
• *Anganwadi* Helpers (Sironkhurd, Jamalpur, Dashrara)  
• Village Volunteers (Sunaura, Sironkhurd, Jamalpur)  
• Child Reporters (Jamalpur, Sunaura)  
• Other community members, including parents, adolescent girls, women, children and representatives of STs (Sahariyas), SCs (Ahirwar, Banskar, Rajak), OBCs (Yadav, Kushwaha) and General Categories (Thakur, Bundela)  
• District Officials (CMO and BSA – CDO and DM not available)  
• Block Officials (BDO, ABSA, ADO of Talbehat Block) |
| FGDs                   | • Women’s Self-Help Groups (Sunaura, Sironkhurd)  
• Pregnant and lactating mothers (Sunaura, Sironkhurd, Jamalpur)  
• Adolescent Girls’ Groups (Sunaura, Sironkhurd)  
• Men (Sironkhurd) |
| Dream-mapping          | • Children (Sahariya hamlet, Jamalpur) |
In addition, the team observed the PRA techniques which Sarathi uses during the five-day Village Planning process to understand the village and to encourage behavior change: in Sironkhurd, we witnessed the use of participatory social mapping, \textit{chapatti} diagramming and a children’s rally. We observed the second day of a three-day mini-planning exercise facilitated by Sarathi in Badhauna village, Jakhaura Block, as well as attending a Talbehat Block Task Force meeting, chaired by the BDO.

**Research constraints**

The team faced certain limitations. For example, we benefited enormously from having three Hindi speakers, but in situations where respondents could only speak local dialect some information and nuance was lost. Since the team members were outsiders, it was not uncommon for community members and frontline government workers to exaggerate in order to impress the team and ensure the community was perceived in a positive light. This made it challenging for the team to uncover the facts in certain situations. Given the fixed duration of the ten-day field trip, the team had limited time in each village. This restricted opportunities for rapport-building with community members, which was particularly problematic with adolescent girls’ groups, where the girls took time to open up and discuss sensitive issues concerning menstrual hygiene, use of contraceptives and HIV/AIDS awareness. Being a film group, and needing to capture certain discussions and interviews on camera, was a constraint on our research. The presence of the camera often intimidated respondents, and determined the framing of their answers to questions. Finally, the presence of Sarathi staff during some interviews and discussions may have influenced the respondents to answer in a way that they believed would be acceptable to the staff.

The research team set out to explore three questions that remain unanswered (Ovung, N. et al, 2007: 6). These are:

1) Firstly, whether the success of Village Planning in generating demand for services is matched by a similar improvement in service delivery?

2) Secondly, whether the benefits of the Village Planning Intervention extend to socially excluded groups?

3) Thirdly, whether the benefits of the Village Planning Intervention will be sustainable beyond the period of UNICEF’s funding and the Sarathi Development Foundation’s involvement in the villages?
### ANNEXURE B: Interviews conducted for Primary Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Visit 1</th>
<th>Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Day 1** Sunaura | 1. FGD with adolescent girls’ group named ‘Ma durga’. (video recorded)  
2. FGD with women’s group named ‘Ma Sarawasti’. (video recorded)  
3. Interviews with Bal Bandhu interviews (video recorded)  
4. Child reporter interviews (video recorded) |
| **Day 2** Dashrara (Non Village Planning Village) | 1. Interview with AWW  
2. Informal discussion with a woman from SC Group (in presence of AWW)  
3. Informal meeting – relative of AWW  
4. FGD with adolescent girls  
5. Interview with Pradhan  
6. Informal Discussion with young married girl  
7. Informal Discussion with SC woman  
8. Informal Discussion with educated SC girl,  
9. Informal Discussion with 18-year old SC pregnant woman  
10. Informal Discussion with SC community,  
11. Informal meeting with Vanskar community |
| **Day 3** Sironkhurd | 1. FGD with Women’s Group  
2. Informal Interview with Village Volunteers  
3. FGD with adolescent girls’ Group  
4. Informal Discussion with the Men |
| **Day 4: Jamalpur** | 1. Informal Discussion with the Sahariya School children  
2. Informal Discussion with Child reporters  
3. Informal Interview with Village Volunteers  
4. Informal Discussion with Lady Health Visitor  
5. Informal Discussion with AWW  
6. FGD with Pregnant Sahariya women  
7. Informal interview with ADO |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Visit 2</th>
<th>Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Day 5:** Bhaduana (Mini Planning) | 1. Informal Discussion with one of the women’s group (video recorded)  
2. Interview with Field coordinator (video recorded)  
3. Informal Interview with Pradhan  
4. FGD with the Ahirwar AGG |
| **Day 6 BTF meeting** | 1. Interview with ADO (video recorded)  
2. Interview with ABSA (video recorded)  
3. Interview with BDO (video recorded) |
| **Day 7** Jamalpur | 1. Interview with Village Volunteer (video recorded)  
2. Interview with AWW (video recorded)  
3. Informal interview with the Pradhan |
| **Day 8** Sunaura & meetings with District officials | 1. Interview with CMO  
2. Interview with BSA  
3. Informal Discussion with Sahariya men  
4. Informal Discussion with Sahariya women |
| **Day 9** Sironkhurd | 1. Interview with the Pradhan and Pradhanpati (her husband)  
2. Informal Discussion with AWWs helper  
3. Informal Discussion with AWWs helper, Volunteers and a few adolescent boys about every point on the Action Plan  
4. Informal Discussion at Sahariya Hamlet with the ST Volunteers and community members.  
5. Interview with SC Volunteer (video recorded) |
ANNEXURE C: The Village Planning Exercise (SDF, A Brief Note on Village Planning: 7-8)

VP stands for Village Planning, VYV stands for Village Youth Volunteer

### Pre Village Planning Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Who does it</th>
<th>Role for Replication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Familiarization with the village</td>
<td>Village Transect; Village Location Map</td>
<td>Project team member (Now replaced by VP Facilitators)</td>
<td>Field level government functionaries like the ANM, AWW etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rapport Building with Village level service providers</td>
<td>Individual Contact</td>
<td>Project team member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Engaging the children</td>
<td>Children Rally</td>
<td>Project Team Member (Now replaced by VP Facilitators)</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identifying Village Youth Volunteers</td>
<td>Community Meeting; Individual Contact</td>
<td>Project team member</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Village Planning Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Who does it</th>
<th>Role for Replication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Re-establishing Contact with village level service providers</td>
<td>Individual Contact</td>
<td>VP team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Involving the children</td>
<td>Children Rally; Drawing competition; Children Documentation</td>
<td>VP Team; Project Team Member</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collecting and analyzing primary information about the households</td>
<td>Baseline survey</td>
<td>Village youth Volunteers (VYV)</td>
<td>The existing government system for generating information could be geared up for this purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identifying and analyzing sectoral and other village level issues</td>
<td>Community and hamlet-wise meetings</td>
<td>VP team</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community based assessment and analysis of village level specific issues</td>
<td>PRA tools (social mapping, chappati diagram and seasonality exercise)</td>
<td>VP team</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Behaviour change communication</td>
<td>Wall writing, village rally, BCC shows, Demonstration, etc.</td>
<td>VYV, self help group members, VP team</td>
<td>NGO Partners, Local Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Engaging community in problem identification, reflection and solution finding</td>
<td>Miking, Village Action Plan (VAP) meeting</td>
<td>VYV and VP team</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Village Action Plan development</td>
<td>Sub-Group Analysis</td>
<td>VP Team</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>Who does it</td>
<td>Role for Replication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VAP Wall Painting</td>
<td>Professional Painter</td>
<td>Village Volunteers (Now being replaced by Self Help Groups/Adolescent Girls Group)</td>
<td>NGO Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visual Documentation of behaviour changes</td>
<td>Change Map (Proposed – Mother and Child Health Monitoring)</td>
<td>Project Team Member; VYV</td>
<td>Government Field Level Functionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quarterly documentation of VAP progress</td>
<td>Follow-up Schedule; VYV monthly meetings; SHG/AGG meetings</td>
<td>Project Team Member; VYV</td>
<td>NGO Partners, Government Training Institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Orientation of VYV for effective behaviour change communication</td>
<td>5-days modular training</td>
<td>Project Team member</td>
<td>Government Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Initiation of VAP implementation</td>
<td>Block and District Meetings; Janta Diwas</td>
<td>VP Team; Project Team; VYV; SHGs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANNEXURE D: Training Module for the Village Volunteers** (SDF, Annual Progress Report: 56).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day One</th>
<th>Day Two</th>
<th>Day Three</th>
<th>Day Four</th>
<th>Day Five</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction and ice breaking</td>
<td>• Recapitulation and energizer</td>
<td>• Recapitulation and energizer</td>
<td>• Recapitulation and energizer</td>
<td>• Recapitulation and energizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on child</td>
<td>• Service Providers in Village</td>
<td>• Quiz</td>
<td>• Quiz</td>
<td>• Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Issues related with children in village</td>
<td>• Village Planning – philosophy and process</td>
<td>• Quality Education</td>
<td>• HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>• Paper Chain – an experiential learning exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How and When a child wins</td>
<td>• Take Home Task - Quiz</td>
<td>• Water and Environment Sanitation</td>
<td>• Mine Field – an experiential learning exercise</td>
<td>• GATHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When a child wins who wins</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Health and Nutrition</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>• Learning and Listening Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion on 18 indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Child Protection</td>
<td>• Role Play</td>
<td>• Model Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Take Home Task – Quiz</td>
<td>• Take home task – Quiz</td>
<td>• Looking at VAP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEXURE E: 19 Behavior Change Indicators (SDF, First Quarterly Report: 10).

1) All children completing primary school with basic learning competencies
2) All young people (15-24) years old have accurate knowledge; practicing safe behaviors related to HIV/AIDS and are accessing youth friendly services
3) All households using iodized salt
4) All members of the family washing hands with soap before eating and after defecation
5) All children exclusively breastfed for at least six months
6) All households have access to improved water sources (including no hand pump breakdown for more than four days)
7) All births registered within 21 days and children receiving birth certificates
8) All deliveries attended by a skilled person
9) 90% of children fully immunized
10) 90% children with diahorrea using ORS and receiving competent care for acute respiratory illness as needed
11) All children consuming sufficient amount of Vitamin A
12) No grade 3-4 malnourished children and less than 30% of children under 5 years of age are grade 1-2 level malnourished
13) Number of children married before 18 years of age reduced by 50%
14) No child involved in hazardous or exploitative labor which negatively affects their development
15) All households have access to adequate sanitation facilities
16) Pregnant women receiving sufficient ante and post natal support including access to quality emergency obstetric care & PPTCT services
17) Schools, health centres and anganwadi centres meeting 'child friendly' criteria based on independent monitoring system
18) All potential communication channels to families effectively promoting key behaviors
19) All villages in the district complete a participatory planning process & monitor progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No:</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>For whom</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Authorities Concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drinking Water</td>
<td>No drinking water.</td>
<td>Pipeline is not laid down completely. Water from the Handpump dries out from January onwards. Only 3 of 24 handpumps work.</td>
<td>Pipeline to cover the entire village. Old tanks to be repaired or new ones to be built.</td>
<td>The Panchayat has passed the resolution. Problem brought to the notice of the waterworks department. Funds have been sanctioned.</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>19.11.05</td>
<td>Prakash Pradhapati</td>
<td>Pappu (Prem Narayan)</td>
<td>Government, Panchayat, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School Teacher</td>
<td>1 headmaster and 1 para teacher for 443 students. No drinking water for children</td>
<td>Drinking water in Junior and Secondary schools. Children have to go back home or to a well situated 50 m from the school.</td>
<td>Teachers to be appointed.</td>
<td>Panchayat and the Education committee would advocate.</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>30.11.05</td>
<td>Education Committee, Pradhan</td>
<td>Raja Bhaiya</td>
<td>ABSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anganwadi</td>
<td>Children are not being weighed</td>
<td>Children are malnourished. 5 out of 28 children are under third grade of malnutrition.</td>
<td>Children should go to the Anganwadi centre on time and the AWW to weigh them on time.</td>
<td>Parents and AWW to hold a meeting.</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>25.11.05</td>
<td>Jai pal Singh, Panchayat</td>
<td>Manoj</td>
<td>Panchayat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td>Problems experienced during nights</td>
<td>No toilets. The existing toilets are not usable.</td>
<td>Construct proper toilets with water supply</td>
<td>Those interested to get toilets constructed should give their names to the Panchayat</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Panchayat to propose after Block gives directions.</td>
<td>Pradhan (Uma Devi)</td>
<td>Panchayat members</td>
<td>Block, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Birth Certificate</td>
<td>Children Don’t have identity</td>
<td>There are no Birth Certificates</td>
<td>Panchayat has asked the Secretary to issue them</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Pradhan, Secretary and community</td>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>Block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>