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South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development

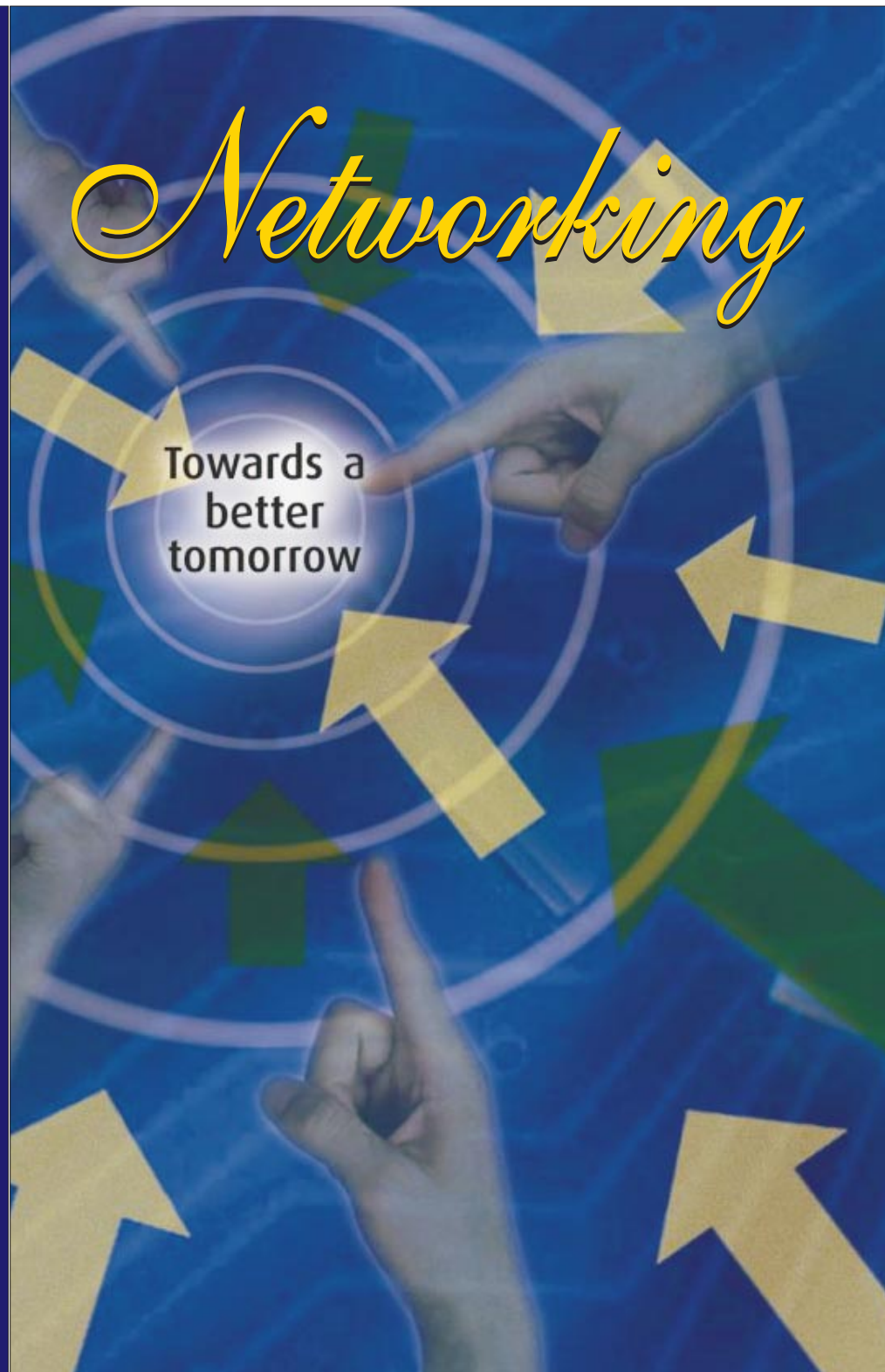
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Networking: Towards a Better Tomorrow

SANSAD



Networking

Towards a better tomorrow



South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development

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Foreword

This valuable publication emerges at a time of much global uncertainty. After the mobilization of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (www.whiteband.org) in 2005, which was one of the most broad based civil society efforts to work jointly around a common set of goals, troubling questions remain. Why is that even though the majority of the people in the world support poverty eradication, meaningful democracy, peace, environmental justice, decent work with decent pay, gender equality and social inclusion, we still have a world that is so far away from these aspirations. A short answer is perhaps the reality that what we have today at the global and national levels is that we have the form of democracy without the substance of democracy. Electoral democracy, important as it is, still suffers what my colleagues at CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation refer to as the deepening democratic deficit.

It is in this context that civil society organisations are posing the question as to how can we have more impact and how can we make positive social change happen. One clear challenge for civil society is to develop ways of working that focuses on the large amount of issues and concerns that civil society groups have considerable agreement about, while agreeing to respectfully disagree around issues of tactics and strategies. Quite often, we see, from the local to the global level, civil society unity is elusive because we mistake principles on the one hand and strategies and tactics on the other and appear to have a penchant for focusing on the minor areas of disagreement rather than the huge commonalities that often exists.

This book entitled “Networking: Towards a Better Tomorrow”, is a timely and helpful resource and contribution to think about how networking can harness the full impact of those that are working for

a more just world, free of the inhumane poverty and injustice that dominates our planet. *Networking: Towards a Better Tomorrow* is written for practitioners and professionals interested in the processes and methods of establishing and stimulating networks.

Understanding networks is difficult when one considers that networks are, in essence, relations between two or more people or institutions. Networks are characterized by great diversity, they often have different objectives, their membership base can be widely different and there are very different ways of setting up, running and maintaining networks. Describing networks, on the other hand, seems a more realistic way of trying to understand them. To describe them in a useful way, however, we need to consider the functions, that networks are designed to (or intended to) carryout.

How does it all get started? This book provides a discussion of the various ways of observing known 'good practices'. Information is provided about why and how to support the development of networks, before they start to network, during the early phases of growing and on the process of maturity. Within any part of the process many location and issue-specific concerns will emerge. This is what makes each network and people's process both particular and unique. There is no single answer or model to promoting participation through networks; there are really only frameworks and guiding principles.

This effort begins by reviewing the general issues involved in networks and capacity building of local activists. It then looks in detail at organizational issues, training, contracting and self-management. Although this book portrays the process of establishing community networks as linear, in reality it is not. The reader should use it as a general framework and not a step-by-step guide. This book which builds on earlier work and practice in this area and attempts to deal with all aspects of networking in a comprehensive manner.

It is also gratifying to see that Anil K Singh, has brought his personal experiences in the networking process and built up helpful conceptual frameworks based on them which will hopefully be useful for the practitioners in a variety of existing and emerging networks.

I hope that this work will stimulate and inspire more reflections on the part of civil society practitioners and others to capture their learning and experience as this field develops more maturity. One of the reasons that importance of networks and networking has been challenged is as a result of the current funding environment, which sometimes treats development solely as a product, rather than a complex, multi-faceted process. Some ask: "Why invest in networks, since we cannot assess their impact". It would be worth remembering the words of Albert Einstein, when he once said: "Not everything that counts can be measured and not everything that can be measured counts". To look for direct casualty, in short time frames, of the value added of networking is a risky and challenging task and one that should be taken with a lot of caution and sensitivity. Oxfam Novib's publication, "Measuring the Immeasurable: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Networks", is a laudable attempt that endeavors to figure out how we assess the performance of networks. This book will take these debates to a higher level and help nourish the reflections and practice in the field.

I recommend this book as useful reading for all those who are committed to ensuring that we harness the best that collective action can offer us. Let us hope that not only will it enhance our thinking but will stimulate new, creative, innovative and effective ways for networking for a more just world.

In Solidarity,



Kumi Naidoo

Secretary General, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation



Preface

"Power does not reside in institutions, not even the state or large corporations. It is located in the networks that structure society."

(Manuel Castells, 2004)

The term 'network' - from the realm of the Internet to the WTO, to anti-globalisation protests, to Al Qaeda, has become the latest buzzword and a part and parcel of development, all over the world today.

Companies, who intend to deploy a knowledge management initiative, find networks as the most effective form of an organizational model. Researchers on social capital, organizational management and globalisation all talk of networks. Policymakers and practitioners, in government and civil society, are either setting up or becoming involved in numerous networks.

The growth of networks as an organizational form is generally seen as a response to an increasingly complex world, which has spawned new arrangements for collaboration among like-minded or like-interested parties, as well as actors that have not traditionally worked together. This process has also been facilitated by the rapid change in communication technologies, which has opened up possibilities for information sharing, and collaboration, which previously would not have been possible.

In fact, networks have existed for millennia (e.g. among agriculturalists, political groups, religious organisations, institutes of higher learning), and have been important players underpinning cultural relations and promoting social capital.

In contemporary society, networks exist as more or less formalized social arrangements – communities of practice, coalitions and alliances, public-private partnerships, policy research networks, service delivery networks and increasingly include actors coming together to ‘govern by networks’ – essentially diverse forms of organizing that link capacities (individuals and organisations) across boundaries to exchange ideas, generate knowledge and mobilize for collective action.

Development practitioners have increasingly noted the importance of linking or connecting actors through networks, or other types of collaborative arrangements, as a way of addressing developmental issues more effectively in dynamic, complex and challenging environments. This has led to increased interest in networks as change agents or mobilizers of social and economic capital. What have been less explored are the capacity dimensions or characteristics of networks, including the notion of networks as a ‘form of capacity’, i.e. one, which is different, or varies by degree, for example, from single organisations or multi-organizational systems.

Much of the enthusiasm around networks is rooted in a belief that the capacity of networks is greater than the sum of its parts. It is generally believed that networks can generate capacity and have an impact on social change processes, which is greater than that which could be achieved by members acting alone.

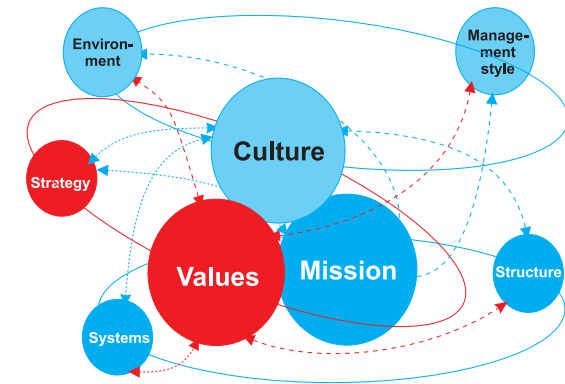
There is a sense among practitioners in the development community today that conceptual frameworks and intervention repertoires need to be further analyzed, and support extended to capacitate the development of networks to help them make better choices about their strategies.

This book is intended to serve two purposes:

- 1) to contribute to the conceptual understanding of networks and associated capacity issues: what is a network, why do networks emerge, why and how are networks distinct or different from organisations or multi-organizational systems, what capabilities make them work, how do these capabilities develop over time, and what is their significance in responding to development challenges in the present context, and

- 2) to explore some implications for addressing capacity issues in networks, including choices of intervention strategies.

This book is not intended to offer a comprehensive review of network experiences, or capacity issues related thereto, nor does it offer an exhaustive analysis of many concerns.



Anil K. Singh
Robin Stevens

Executive Summary

Citizen networks will become a more and more significant development mechanism to link, to provide communal direction, to learn together and to gradually dissipate the considerable constraints from several structural problems, which work against the poor.

(Somsook Boonyabancha)

From the realm of the Group of Thirty Three (G33) in the WTO, to anti-globalization protests, to various terrorist outfits, 'networks' is the latest catchphrase. We hear that networks represent the most effective organizational model. So too in the field of development: researchers on social capital, organizational management and globalization all talk about networks. Practitioners are setting up numerous networks and showing that they can improve policymaking processes – and particularly the use of information in them.

Understanding networks is difficult when one considers that networks are, in essence, relations between two or more people or institutions. Networks are very different from each other, have different objectives, different members and work in even more different ways. Describing networks, on the other hand, seems a more realistic way of trying to understand them. To describe them in a useful way, however, we need to consider the functions, that networks are designed to (or intended to) carryout.

How does it all start? This book provides a discussion of the various ways of observing known 'good practices'. Information is provided about why and how to support the development of networks, both before they start to network and during the early phases of growing.

Within any part of the process many location and issue-specific concerns will emerge. This is what makes each network and people's process both particular and unique. There is no single answer or model to promoting participation through networks; there are only frameworks and guiding principles.

Organization of the Book

The first chapter introduces the concept and theory of networks in a more practical and applied sense as has been popular across agencies and regions. Hence we can have NGO networks, public-private partnerships, policy research networks among numerous others, where different individuals or organisations come together in theory to work more effectively. It is believed - certainly in the development sector - that networks in practice enable diverse forms of organisation to link the capacity of individuals and organisations to exchange ideas, generate knowledge and also to work towards collective action.

The next chapter introduces us to the forms, types and dimensions that form the foundation of networking including the dynamics that goes into them. To cap it all, we take a short tour of the types of networks that are currently in existence in our part of the world.

Each of the next two chapters (3-4) is devoted to the roles and responsibilities of networks. In an unerring way, each chapter presents how the role of networks be it managerial or influencing is of prime importance for networks. In the area of management we try 1) to understand what constitutes an effective organizational network when teams do much of the work of the organization; (2) to examine the internal and external environs. We raise questions to guide future research, and point to potential managerial implications.

In the area of influencing we see that there is a considerable body of evidence suggesting that networks can help improve policy processes through better information use. They may, for example, help marshal evidence and increase the influence of good-quality evidence in the policy process. They can foster links between researchers and policymakers; bypass formal barriers to consensus; bring resources and expertise to policymaking; and broaden the pro-poor impact of a policy.

Chapter 5 is probably the most pragmatic of the chapters, as it describes some of the most important issues and pre-requisites towards achieving sustainability in networks including the critical question of funding that faces networks today.

To take up years-long struggles to create a more just and humane world for others, advocates must first create one for themselves - in their movements, their organizations, and their personal lives. In Chapter 6, we look at what it takes to sustain advocacy for the long haul. We start by first familiarizing the readers with the southern outlook of advocacy and then go on to show how advocacy is required as it is always easier to destroy a movement than to build one. Thus Advocacy requires many qualities - innovation, hope, stamina, drive, grit, determination, resolve, and commitment. When an effort is clearly winning, it is easy to sustain these, as individuals and organizations. But when an issue suffers a setback or fades from public view, an organization's leadership faces its greatest challenges. This chapter explores the directions needed to create strong organizations that motivate, energize, and support people engaged in the effort. Strong organizations must also buffer members against both external and internal tensions.

Chapter 7, the book's concluding chapter, Directions and Implications, contains some glimpses of possible futures and how networks could play a part in the movement towards democratic technology. The chapter concludes with a short section on why it's important to become active in the struggle to develop democratic technology and offers some suggestions.

This book is not intended for armchair edification or amusement. The ideas discussed in the book have a chance to become realized only if there is a strong and sustained struggle.

Finally, we've provided a concise bibliography. We do believe that there are many other documents and writers that have influenced our thinking during the course of our writings and to them also we owe our sincere thanks.

A Meliorist Stance

In this book, we take a meliorist stance. Meliorism assumes that things can get better, but only if people act to ensure that outcome. Meliorism is a pragmatic viewpoint, a problem-solving viewpoint. It does not ignore problems or explain them away with platitudes or ideology. The opposite of meliorism is fatalism, the doctrine that claims that powerful forces beyond human influence irrevocably set the trajectory of human history. Today there are fatalists of all kinds.

Some feel that networks are leading us ever closer to failures. Others believe that networks are an unqualified boon, and the newer, faster, shinier, and more powerful they are, the sooner we'll arrive at our utopian destination.

People, of course, do influence the course of the future in large and small ways through their actions. Increasingly, however, many critical decisions are made out of the public view and are oblivious of, and insensitive to, the public good. This need not be the case. Democracy is a tool of public deliberation and decision-making. It is a tool of meliorism. Today, unfortunately, we are finding that the tool of democracy is becoming increasingly misunderstood, underused, irrelevant, and blunt. It may also be the case that people have lost the skill and/or the desire to wield the tool. If there is to be a democratic revival in which people begin to increase their motivation and effectiveness, networks and the struggle to develop them may play a major role.

Who Should Read This Book?

This book is intended for a wide audience of people who are interested in networks as a tool to strengthen and reinvigorate communities. This group of people includes as a matter of fact — just about anyone.

Motivation and Purpose

This book is not intended to be a cookbook for networks. The methodology are all indispensable, of course, to creating networks, but the most important aspects of a network, to our mind, are the involvement of community members and organizations in the process and the ability of the system to address real world problems using

primarily real people to do it. Networks can be thought of as an important tool, but this is only a partial viewpoint, for it leaves many of the most critical questions unanswered. These questions center around who uses the tool and controls its use, what policies guide its use, and what is the purpose of the tool. The citizens of today and tomorrow can help determine the answers to these questions.

We hope this book will be useful to you. We also hope that the dedication and vision of the developers will be as inspiring to you as they were to us. We apologize in advance for topics that we didn't cover or cover well enough and for those that received far too much ink. The field is immense, it is growing much too fast for us to capture all of it. We look forward to hearing your comments both positive and negative and also your sagacious piece of advice. Most importantly, we look forward to working with you in the future in building a strong and effective network movement. ■

List of abbreviations

ADAB	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
FAO	Food & Agricultural Organisation
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
GONGO's	Government organized NGOs
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NACDOR	National Conference of Dalit Organisation
NAFRE	National Alliance for the Fundamental Right to Education
NCAS	National Centre For Advocacy Studies
NCDHR	National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PEST	Political, Economic, Social, and Technological factors
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
QUANGOS	Quasi-NGOs
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based

SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
TNC	Trans National Corporation(s)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VANI	Voluntary Action Network India
VHAI	Voluntary Health Association of India
VO/ VOs	Voluntary Organisations
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization



"A wise man learns by the experience of others.

An ordinary man learns by his own experience.

A fool learns by nobody's experience."



1

C H A P T E R

Concept & Theory of Networks

Concept & Theory of a Networks

The birth of networking

Formation of networks within society is not new. Hunter-gatherers daily survived overwhelming ecological odds through cooperation and leveraging individual efforts through bonds of mutual trust and reciprocity.

Throughout the ages, the poor have formed networks of reciprocity and exchange as a response to economic insecurity, lack of social services and marginalisation in the political process.

As long as unemployment is high and living in poverty is a reality, and as long as large segments of the population find it difficult to access medical, child care and other services, the poor and marginalized build their own social and economic systems - strong networks of reciprocal exchange among members of their community.

The interest in the process of networking has been growing during recent years. There are four fundamental drivers behind this current interest:

- The emergence of information and communications technology (ICT) in 1980s and 1990s has made (global) networking much easier. Global information exchange and learning with people from different parts of the world has become accessible for large parts of the world.
- A '*sense of urgency*': the growing complexity and inter-relatedness of major social, economic and environmental problems and the failure of some of the narrow approaches to solve issues like HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation and poverty alleviation makes multi-stakeholder and widespread learning unavoidable and highly needed.

- A 'sense of frustration' among public and academic actors because of the marginalisation of many research endeavours and the lack of impact that research has had on public policy recently.
- Due to private sector experiments with *knowledge management* and the impact on the private sector, the public sector and civil society organisations have also become interested in it.

Concept of a network

The concept of 'network' came from electronic engineering and started acquiring prominence in the development field during the early 70's because of an intense realization among development activists about the limitations of individual efforts in dealing with complex development issues of contemporary society. Experiences of associations across voluntary organizations were not very encouraging, even though several associational ventures had been in existence, as most of these associations either catered to the need of one issue or only one section of society.

The word 'network' is defined as formal and informal institutional frameworks, with loose or structured parameters and with detailed tasks and responsibilities of its members. Networks help to link individuals, groups and organizations of various walks of life and provide greater strength to people working for a common cause. Networks perform a wide range of functions: from sharing and disseminating information to acting as a pressure group to influence policies. Members of a network lend valuable support to each other and help its members in perspective building or developing innovative approaches to developmental activities. Networking denotes an action (a verb), a process that involves a number of actors and brings a dynamic relationship between and among the various actors of civil society.

The traditional form of organizing mechanisms neither provided space for individuals to interact freely with other organized entities nor did they allow free flow of ideas. On the other hand, networks not only provide opportunity, but also encourage their members to interact, exchange information, dialogue, and act together with those who may be placed in different organizational settings—voluntary organiza-

tions, government or academic institutions, trade unions, political parties, women's organizations, mass movements, campaigns etc. Networks also create the possibility of individuals and organizations working on a similar issue, with somewhat different perspectives, to meet, share information, knowledge base, expertise, skills, resources, capacities and work together on specific issues.

Network are very significant in catering to the needs of voluntary organizations and in creating an environment that is favorable to meet their objectives. It ensures people's involvement, provides a mechanism to influence policy-makers and a forum to take-up major issues concerning themselves.

What is a network?

Several authors and network coordinators have provided definitions on what multi-actor networking entails, often depending on what their networks are about. It seems impossible to come up with a definition that embraces all notions. What is clear is that networking is about organisations, institutions and individual actors joining forces around on a common concern. It is also about building relationships with other independent actors to share knowledge, goods and experiences and to learn from each other with a common goal in mind.

Almost all (civil society) *networking* is characterized by four types of activities: the provision of services, learning together, advocacy and management.

- The *provision of services* refers mostly to providing information and training. It is about the networks communications infrastructure. Almost all networks for example do have a newsletter or a website which act as vehicles for the exchange of ideas and experiences. Often documentation and library services are provided as well.
- *Learning together* refers to the joint activities undertaken to raise members' level of understanding of the complexity of development problems. It includes mutual appraisals, exchange visits, workshops and other meetings. Common elements are joint diagnosis, exchange, comparison and synthesis.

Definition of networks

- Plucknett (1990) A network can be defined as an association of independent individuals or institutions with a shared purpose or goal, whose members contribute resources and participation in two-way exchanges or communications.
- Engel (1993) Networking is the process resulting from our conscious efforts to build relationships with each other... networks are more or less formal, more or less durable relational patterns that emerge as a result of such efforts. The core business is not the manufacture of products or the provision of services, but social learning, communication and the making of meaning.
- Creech/Willard (2001) A formal knowledge network is a group of expert institutions working together on a common concern, to strengthen each other's research and communications capacity, to share knowledge bases and develop solutions that meet the needs of target decision makers at the national and international level
- Carley & Christie (2002) Networks are non-hierarchical social systems, which constitute the basis social form that permits an inter-organizational coalition to develop.
- Milward and Provan (2003) Networks are emergent phenomena that occur when organisations or individuals begin to embrace a collaborative process, engage in joint decision making and begin to act as a coherent entity. When this occurs, a network has emerged. These new inter-organizational forms are referred to as partnership, coalitions, alliances, strategic alliance networks, consortiums and networks.

- *Advocacy* refers to those activities performed or facilitated by the network to participate in and influence the public or government debate about development policy.
- Finally, almost all networks are characterized by a '*management unit*' whose role is to facilitate the networking process. This includes maintaining or improving the communication infrastructure, overseeing the networks operating procedures, monitoring its resources, activities and outputs, and linking with other organisations and networks.

Thus networks synergise and attempt to bring groups, organisations or individuals together voluntarily and consciously.

What networking does?

The purpose of a network firstly at the basic level is **communication** across parties, with whom linkage is planned to be established in order to overcome isolation, or for educating, sensitizing, and motivating a person or a group of persons or organisations on any particular issue or a series of issues. Network provides for free flow of experiences and ideas across individuals and groups. Communication in a network can be initiated by anyone and received by any one.

Secondly **solidarity** across parties, during a crisis either material or emotional. It helps in gaining support and bringing about mutual accountability.

The third purpose is to **influence others - the public at large, the political parties, media, corporate sector** etc. The shared analysis and common vision among various actors of civil society are the basis to influence public policy (public policy in a contemporary context, may be made by a local, regional or national government or a bilateral, multilateral agency or other actors like MNCs at the national and / or global levels).

The fourth purpose is that of **mobilizing energy / resources** particularly among individuals. New ideas, designs and perspectives get elaborated through new ways of relating with each other. Networks emerging around socially difficult issues such as child labour, environment protection, violence against women, human rights etc. are able to mobilize individuals and groups and promote linkage, energy / resource mobilization among them.

Lastly networks promote **linkage building**. Bringing together like-minded individuals, groups and institutions around a shared development agenda can be facilitated through a network. The purpose is not to coordinate the activities of those individuals or groups but to facilitate it through systematic communication, sharing of information, experience and ideas.

The dilemma that networks are facing is of striking a balance between the complexity of its purpose and the commonality of thoughts between the parties forming a network. More complex the purpose, the more it is difficult for a network to have parties of common thought. If the purpose is simple, it is easier to have parties of common thought, but those not having commonality in their thoughts remain outside the purview of the network and are difficult to be influenced.

A network strives to achieve a balance by defining its purpose suitable to the environment in its area of operation and trying to influence a large gamut of parties engaged in a variety of activities.

Networks can be used for variety of purposes. It may be for achieving short-term as well as long-term goals. Different networks have been used for achieving different goals and different networks may be relevant for different situations. The relevance of a network can be briefly assessed on the following aspects.

A network may act as:

- ❑ A vehicle for identifying, articulating and discussing issues of major concerns, which are difficult to deal within an existing institutional / organizational framework.
- ❑ An alternative arena for elaborating and sharpening newer ideas, visions, and perspectives. This is largely because new ideas entail a critique of and departure from the established modes. The existing institutional framework tends to curtail such possibilities.
- ❑ To provide support to grass-root organizations at the time of their hardship or retaliation from vested interests, especially to organizations working for awareness building, organizing people for their rights and for social change. These types of organizations inevitably invite retaliation from vested interests. Networks are also necessary to deal with such retaliations as a political strategy.
- ❑ A relevant strategy for resisting the increasingly diminishing democratic space and functioning at various levels in a given local, national, regional and international situation.
- ❑ To utilize and identify, encourage and revitalize individuals and small groups to support the cause of social transformation, and

- ❑ To exchange information, experience and vision across the cultures, systems, countries and continents.

Besides these, a network could be the most efficient and flexible mechanism for sharing information, experiences and ideas across people, from various ideologies, groups and organizations spread geographically and working on diverse issues.

A network of voluntary organizations and people's organizations can play a major role in the collection and dissemination of information, highlighting people's analysis and viewpoint to build public opinion, to lobby with (or advocacy directed towards) policy makers and elected representatives of the people thereby building solidarity among voluntary/people's organizations and preparing a strategy for putting pressure on the Government.

A network's role is very crucial because most of the time outside factors play an important role in deciding a country's developmental mode and directions especially in developing countries.

Why a network or networking process is needed

Voluntary organisations need to unite in order to achieve long term sustainable, people centered and participatory development. Networks develop collective strength among voluntary organisations (VOs) to enable them to influence macro and micro issues, policies and frameworks. They build solidarity among VOs and people's organisations, by overcoming the feeling of isolation that most of them start having after working for a long period in small, limited, many a times remote, far-flung rural areas, mostly engaged at the grassroots level and remaining focused within that socio-economic-political context.

In situations where the state or other vested interests in society have posed a threat or made an attack on voluntary organisations, networks provide support by creating pressure on the administration, giving moral boosting; in order to protect the space, role, legitimacy and credibility of the organization.

Networks provide for the opportunity of interaction, exchange of information, dialogue, joint action among those who may be situated

in different organizational settings – VOs, government, academic institutions, trade unions, political parties, corporate agencies etc. Networks also create the possibility for individuals and organisations working on similar issue(s) with a somewhat different perspective to come together, share their information, knowledge base, expertise, resources, capacities in order to work together on that specific issue.

Networks provide a forum to take up major issues concerning VOs, identifying, articulating and discussing those, which are difficult to deal within the existing institutional framework. It provides new logic, arguments coming up through a participatory discussion process, thus giving new insights for organisations to pursue their goals. Networks can also become an alternate arena for elaboration and sharpening of newer ideas, visions and perspectives. Networks increase the visibility and bargaining power of VOs. It is noticed that wherever networks exist, the voluntary sector is more visible to the public, government and donors.

With the ever increasing role of the voluntary sector in the development of the country / region, networks have acquired different dimensions to meet the expectations of providing space for the effective functioning of the voluntary organisations and promoting value based voluntary action. Strong networks with the capacity to voice the efforts of the sector, with the competency to take up the challenge of building a true image of the voluntary sector with the public at large and projecting its future role is the need of the hour.

The process of networking

It often starts with an initiator, a *prime-mover* who stimulates, invites and calls on others to encourage them to form part of a network around a topic of common interest with the aim to upgrade, upstream and upshift the NGO activities relating to that topic. The initiator plays a catalytic role, which requires time, thought and financial resources.

During this first *scooping phase* interests, capabilities and expectations to work together are explored by the different potential members of the network. This may involve visits to other organisations, face-to-face meetings or initial workshops to explore interests. After this

scooping (start) phase, the network comes into being in the *operational* and *consolidation phase*.

During this stage the network grows into full operation. Meetings and workshops are organized, rules of association are discussed and drawn up, exchanges and study tours are organized and a need begins to emerge for some regular means of communication between members, for example through a newsletter.

During a third stage there is a *consolidation* of the structure of the network. It is also during this stage that the objectives may be redefined and the structure redesigned to cope with new challenges. The network is now in full shape. It often spans various activities (service delivery, advocacy) and a small secretariat keeps the network going.

Experience shows that it normally takes from two to five years before a network establishes and produces concrete results. This is often at odds with donor funding, which is often reduced at the moment when a network matures (after three/four years).

Finally there is a stage of *dissolution* of the network or *evolution and adjustment* to new issues. Termination of a network is rarely the case. It is more common that networks move on to new activities.

Difference between Network and Networking

These commonly used terms can be confusing. Networking (a verb) can be understood as the act of inter-relating among people or organizations, such as to exchange information and other resources. Networks and network organizations (nouns), in contrast, usually refer to the arrangement of inter-linked people or organizations. A network organization is one kind of network that has become relatively formal, institutionalized and legally registered. Here it is important to clarify that any organisation can do networking but all those who are engaged in networking are not necessarily networks.

- Network is an identity while networking is a process.
- Networking is much more than simple identity and is a continuous process (not future or past but present)
- While network pre-supposes coming together networking pre-

supposes relating to (relates to somebody always)

- Networking becomes important to make network effective and impactful.

Emergence and development of networks

Emergence and development of networks is enabled by a variety of endogenous factors in societies as well as external factors. Some of the factors at play include, but are not limited to the following:

Endogenous factors:

- Pre-existing social capital – strong relationships among like-minded individuals and organisations with some capabilities who are motivated to learn and act together because they believe they can better achieve their purpose through a network
- Opening of political space
- Other factors: leadership with vision, credibility and legitimacy

External factors:

- External interventions that help to open up political space
- Facilitation of exchange and the coming together of isolated individuals with competencies and organisations with capabilities
- Access to external resources (e.g. funding, means of communication)

Why support civil society networks?

A shared premise of many civil society programmes and projects is that effective civil society organizations are essential backbones of thriving communities and countries. They make vital contributions to citizens' democratic rights and well-being by giving voice to citizen interests and providing services where they are needed.

Civil society organizations are recognized globally for their success in shaping public policy, keeping government accountable, transforming conflict and promoting peace, defending human rights and ensuring that citizens have access to basic services.

Networks of civil society organizations, when successful, enable citizens to *amplify their voices* and achieve greater influence and impacts in policy, democratic governance and social change. In striving for results like building more peaceful and just societies or preventing vulnerable citizens from abuses of human rights, civil society networks can provide:

- ❑ Forums for people to share experiences, express identities, discuss and debate needed changes and craft strategies for action;
- ❑ Protection for those who are otherwise vulnerable to exploitation, abuse or retribution for speaking out;
- ❑ Jointly-governed bodies for coordinating campaigns and other kinds of joint action;
- ❑ Legitimacy with policy makers and other institutional leaders in democratic contexts, due to the numbers and social identities of those seeking change.

Effective networks can enable service-providing civil society groups and organizations to *increase their social development impacts* by extending their reach to poor and marginalized groups, expanding the scale of their programmes or improving the quality of services. Such networks can provide:

- ❑ Linkages to facilitate communication and learning among groups and organizations with similar programs;
- ❑ Platforms to coordinate programs, activities and resources of multiple groups and organizations to achieve shared policy or programme goals;
- ❑ Legitimacy with government and donors as accountable and cost-effective vehicles for implementing social development policies and programmes that reach the poorest, most isolated or marginalized communities;
- ❑ Jointly-governed bodies for managing coordinated programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, civil society networks also provide benefits to democratizing societies over the longer term in their capacities as *democratic forms of*

organization. Since networks are based on interdependent relationships among autonomous groups, they usually involve members in some form of joint communication, decision-making and governance.

- As forums, linkages and convening spaces, networks can be *opportunities for building social capital* among like-minded individuals and groups or among diverse groups that share common goals and aspirations. While any given forum or campaign alliance may be temporary, satisfying personal and institutional relationships characterized by mutual trust and shared norms for working together tend to endure and become resources for future action.
- As jointly-governed committees or institutional bodies, networks can be *schools for nurturing democratic citizenship*. To produce effective results, leaders must develop skills in democratic practices like building consensus, facilitating dialogue, and following democratic procedures for decision-making. Network members must develop skills in communication, coordination and legitimate decentralized decision-making. ■

C H A P T E R

2

Forms, Types, Dimensions and Dynamics of Networks

Forms, Types, Dimensions and Dynamics of Networks

Great thinkers - Buddha, Chanakya, Confucius and Machiavelli - have stated in different ways that it is the context which provides meaning and helps one in deciding the best course of action. It is our endeavour here to delineate and map the larger context.

Difference between Network, Consortium, Coalition and Federation

The process of networking seems to be very easy and simple from the outside but it is a very complex one, because in networking we are dealing with various kinds of actors, people, institutions and structures, which are very unlike from each other.

Also generally people interchangeably use the terms given below without understanding the concept or its meaning and therefore a lot of confusion arises. In reality we have found that although some sort of institutional framework or processes are given these names, yet they are not the same and there is a cyclical process that these stages undergo which are elaborated below.

Network

A network has an institutional framework, is structured or loose with some set of parameters, has well defined and specific tasks and responsibilities and has defined boundaries. There are both internal and external functions of a network.

Consortium

In a consortium the structure is loose and internal management is medium. Resources are pooled and distributed according to the

objectives set forth. As soon as the distribution of resources is finished the consortium disintegrates. Complete autonomy exists in a consortium.

Coalition/Alliance

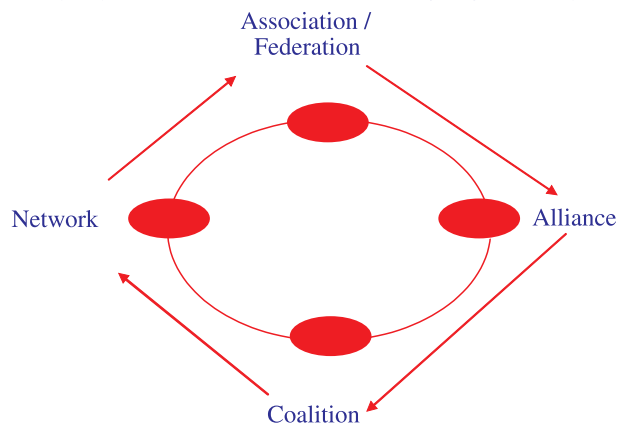
In a coalition, sets of people with different ideologies come together to address a common issue. It is essentially issue based, time bound and campaign driven. Coalition is a union, fusion: a temporary combination of parties that retain distinctive principles and identities. Coalition is less formalized, have flexibility in operation and do not have any defined or limited boundaries.

Federation

A federation is highly formal in nature and very highly coordinated. It has a very well defined structure and the internal management mechanism is highly formalized. Convergence of common interests is there in a federation but generally the individual entities get merged into collective entities. Membership is very formal and based on certain principles, guidelines and norms. Generally taking up of membership of two federations at the same time is regarded as a violation of law.

Cycle of the networking process

The starting point of the networking process is the formation of an alliance of people at the onset. It is a coming together, a process of like-



minded groups and movements who while retaining their autonomous identities, are working together to bring the struggle for a people-oriented development model to the center-stage of politics and public life. It is understood that such an alliance, emerging with a definite ideological or issue based commonality and common strategy, can give rise to a strong social, political force and a national people's movement.

The second stage of the networking process is a coalition. It is comprised of people dealing with similar concerns and could be representative of both rural and urban areas. It is meant to organize for collective power by advancing transformative work, thinking and leadership of communities and individuals working to a particular end.

It then moves forward to become a network with its aims being to:

- Strengthen the engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in policy-making and development initiatives to achieve desired targets
- Improve regional / global co-operation between CSOs of differing perspectives, priorities and skills
- Increase the number of NGO advocates able to communicate clearly on policy issues and the broader agenda
- Act as a forum for dialogue between governments and CSOs on policies
- Share relevant and accessible information on emerging issues

When the network starts to finalize in a systematic manner and makes rules / regulations for that, including membership management then it starts to become a federation. This goes one step further in recognizing that the commonality of objectives is of a continuing nature, and giving a stable and formal character to the alliance can further the shared objective. However, the social differences between the participating organisations are such that they do not wish to give up their autonomy.

A federation can work effectively because each of the participants works effectively; in the event that a federation goes forward to form a unitary organisation, then the native organising and decision-making methods of all or some of the participants may be lost. Federation is

typically the chosen form of organisation for groups having distinct languages or cultures or being located faraway from each other; in each of these cases communication would *suffer* not improve if the federation were to be prematurely resolved.

Certain forms of political and constitutional dispute are common to federations. One issue that is often a source of controversy is the exact division of power and responsibility. Another common issue in federal systems is the conflict between regional and national interests, or between the interests and aspirations of different ethnic groups. In some federations the entire jurisdiction is relatively homogeneous and each constituent element resembles a miniature version of the whole; this is known as 'congruent federalism'. On the other hand, incongruent federalism exists where different elements possess distinct ethnic groups.

The ability to mediate differences that arise due to linguistic, ethnic, religious, or other regional differences is an important challenge and it is on account of these and other socio-political compulsions that federations often collapse.

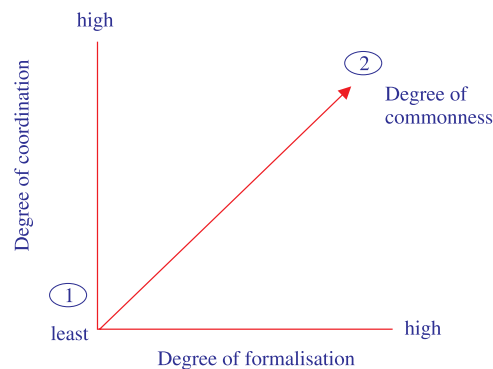
Subsequent to the collapse of the federation, the cyclical process continues through the formation of an alliance or a number of alliances within that group (federation).

Dimensions of function in a network

The dimensions around which a network function are:

- ❑ Coordination
- ❑ Commonness
- ❑ Formalization

The graph has three variable viz. Coordination, Formalization, Commonness. (1) denotes the networks having minimum coordination, commonalities and formalization and (2) networks having



maximum coordination, commonalities and formalization, respectively.

The popular ways of coming together can be distinguished on the basis of the these parameters:

Parameters / Formations	Coordination	Formalization	Commonness
Federation	High	High	High
Coalition	High	Low	High
Alliance	Low	Low	High
Network	Medium / High	Medium / High	Low

Degree of formalization : Some networks are informal in nature, any one can join the network, there are no set procedures for membership; while there are other networks who are very formal in nature, they have a procedure for membership, they have specified rules, duties and privileges for their members. Normally a network is initially informal but gradually becomes formal. It is essential to maintain a relationship in a network without getting bogged down into formalization. Formality cements relationships and does not create it.

Degree of coordination : It is the extent to which coordination can be achieved within and outside a network. Coordination is to ensure the promotion of communication across linkages. Networks have to ensure maximum coordination without interfering in the functioning or activities of its members, without undermining their authority or autonomy.

Degree of commonness : It shows level of commonness of thoughts among the members of a network. It is the base for forming a network. More the commonality, more the network becomes ideological in nature. More the diversity, more are the expectations of the members of a network, higher is the degree of formalization. Coordination is maximum when the degree of commonness is highest. In search of commonness and pursuit of more purposes, networks become more and more formalized and reach a stage when they can be recognized as a federation.

It is difficult to define a standard for the degrees of the above dimensions of a network. Every network has to decide the levels of coordination, commonness and formalization suitable to its objectives and the environment in which it operates. Formation of a network should be appropriate to the situations and needs.

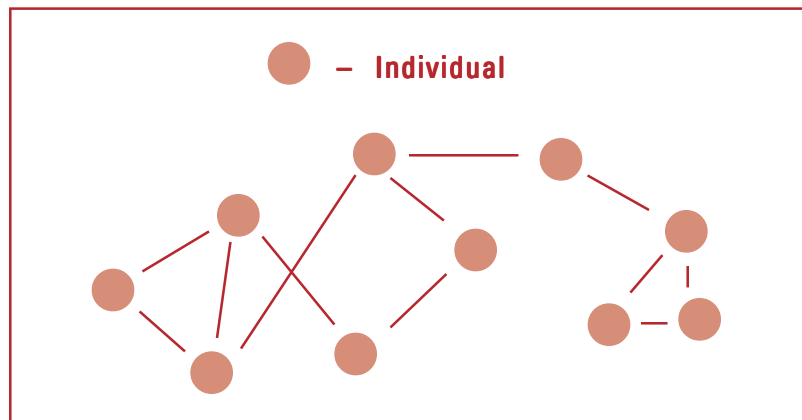
Forms of networking

Since new professional and organizational networks will have a major impact on the future quality of social and sustainable development and on the experiences of members a better understanding of the management of networks is vital for the development of intelligent management practice and policy.

Networks are not organized in any uniform pattern. They vary across a range of key dimensions. Different network forms appear suited to achieving different tasks and require different management approaches.

Some of the most prominent forms of network are **loose**, **structured**, **centralized** and **decentralized**.

(a) Loose: In this, the network is loosely organized. Linkages across individuals, groups and organisations are informal and anyone can contact anyone. The broad purpose of such a network seems to be to motivate individuals, groups and organisations to remain in touch with each other. In this form sharing of information, experiences and

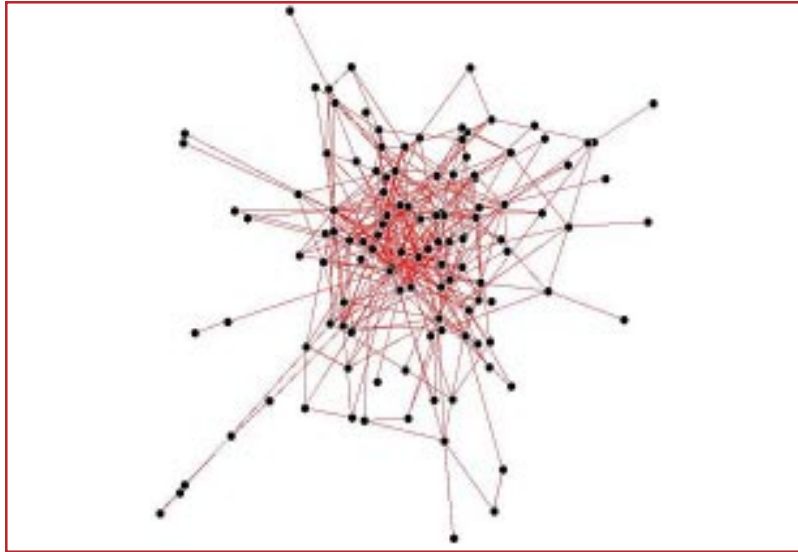


ideas is left to the individual initiative. In this sort of a network there are no set or well-defined rules, no formal membership, no secretariat or office, no structure of governance etc.

Commonly a close-knit group with a high level of social cohesion, a loose network is sustained through common bonds and by a flat structure in which there is a high level of equality between members. Shared commitment, trust and egalitarianism are key, with little inclination to accept central or mandated authority but with a strong sense of group membership. Many local partnerships and informal networks take on this form, drawing strength from the legitimacy and ownership provided by their association or network.

Such networks have great value in creating and developing legitimacy and trust between individuals, professionals and organisations, leading to the sharing of information, ideas and strategies and to new ways of working. Principled commitment and integrity are powerful cohesive forces in these networks. However, these networks can fail where the commitment and sense of membership required results in 'burnout', or where emerging disagreements over what the shared values and principles really are, leads to the network splitting up. They can be unstable where there is insufficient institutionalization (such as shared resources).

(b) Structured: They have an organizational core, which has the authority to regulate the work of its members. They exhibit characteristics similar to single organisations and many hierarchical networks take the form of partnership organisations with their own constitutions, distinct from their members. Such networks are often controlled by steering groups and via direct authorities that, for example, undertake inspection and accreditation. These networks also tend to be sustained by commonly shared values, but those values are of a kind that prepare people to accept working to structured joint agreements or protocols. Such networks, therefore, are most successful in co-ordinating and controlling a pre-defined task such as a quality improvement programme. The co-ordinating function of the hierarchical network has the potential to clarify complex divisions of labour for certain tasks.



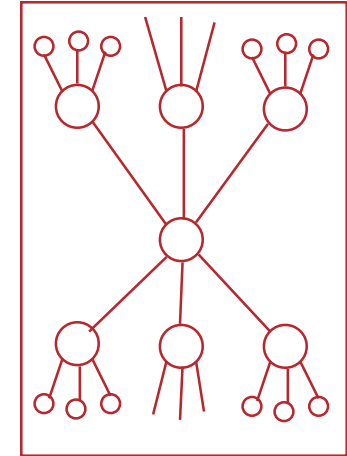
This pose of a network has some form of a formal office or secretariat, some set of rules / regulations, a formal membership with some set of criterion(s), a structure of governance with defined roles of the board members.

The weakness of these networks is that they may fail through over-regulation and over-bureaucratic procedures that limit their ability to innovate and so demotivate their members. This problem appears to be present in networks mandated by government that wish to simultaneously stimulate local innovation through networks while imposing a degree of authority and control over activities. Other reasons for failure include that network members lose respect for the authority that regulates the network, or that the network does not appear to provide proportional benefits to all of those individuals and organisations involved.

(c) Centralized: Here the organisations can contact each other through one central secretariat.

In the centralized model, all functions — strategy and planning, development and operations — report directly to one source. All the assets and the budget — are controlled by the secretariat.

On the surface, this appears to be the most attractive way to manage because there are several obvious benefits. Acquiring of resources is possible on the broadest scale within the organization, and centralized operations produce substantial economies of scale. A centralized staff eliminates redundant functions. A unified approach to architecture and standards reduces integration difficulties and costs. Clarity of purpose and alignment with overall organizational strategies improve due to the simpler organizational communications required. There is a proper control over resources and a proper division of roles.



However, there also are potential problems with a centralized structure. As a cost center, large budgets are a constant point of contention, putting it on the defensive within the organization. A fully centralized structure also requires a very effective decision and resource allocation process within the organization, since each member unit can have different or conflicting needs. Also, if the operations and programmes planning are not done in a proper and cohesive manner, outages in one member unit can cripple the entire network.

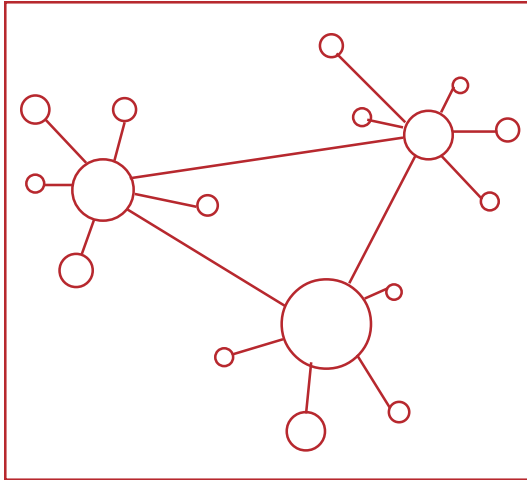
The decision making process is also very time consuming and more staff, infrastructure and resources are required to manage things. The CEO or the Secretary also finally lands up pretending to be a boss with all others being subservient to him / her.

The key to a centralized organization's success is its responsiveness. If the big centralized operation can be responsive to the needs, then that approach can make sense.

(d) Decentralized: Different functions and activities are decentralized.

Each member organization has complete knowledge and choice over the allocation of resources to support priorities and programmes. Costs are

fully allocated to each member organization's initiative and there is the perception of faster, more flexible responses to necessary changes. In a decentralized organizational model, the network is typically perceived as a partner and defensive tensions, which can occur in highly centralized models, are reduced.



However, there are challenges to the decentralized model. The network as a whole will have higher operations costs due to duplicate centers and multiple independent member partnerships. New technology / processes can be very difficult and expensive to introduce. Even relatively inexpensive tools, can proliferate widely, producing unnecessary integration expenses and introducing hurdles to the flow of organization information.

An escalating risk is the potential impact on stakeholders who need services from more than one member organization. Then there is the issue of accountability. Who is responsible for failure — especially of a cross-organizational system? What about accountability and its new complexities?

Decentralized networks are ideal if the probability of getting diverted from the networks vision, mission and values can be restrained.

Types of networks that exist

Broadly speaking, there are five types of networks of voluntary organizations existing:

- ❑ Issue-based networks
- ❑ Area-specific networks
- ❑ Ideological networks

- ❑ Funder-led or funder-driven networks, and
- ❑ Broad-based networks.

(A) Issue-based networks

An issue-based network is created through relationships amongst actors who are interested in a particular issue or problem through either common or conflicting interests. Their actions are often short-lived and spontaneous. The actors aim to increase their control over actions, resources and other actors with the help of instigating collective actions.

Acting in an issue-based network is based on recognition of dependence and conscious networking. It is, however, common that a great number of those who belong to the network do not actively participate in the collective actions of the network, but that the implementation of the actions to reach the common goal are left for a small number of active participants. Issue-based networks acting as a project organization may be set up for a specific period of time and for some specific goal.

Embeddedness in the networks is apparent in the following way:

The core actors who collectively make decisions in order to start, maintain, increase or possibly end certain relationships constitute the inner circle of the network, at some specific point in time. These core actors vary in the network, to some extent, depending, for instance, on the actions that take place within the network.

The *core* of the network describes other key actors. The number of actors in the core of the issue-based network is small, but all those actors who are in principle supporting the fulfillment of the common aims can be described as actors in the network.

The *outer limits* of the network reach such actors who are outside the core activities but who in some cases have the opportunity to directly or indirectly influence the actions of the core of the network.

The outer environment refers to the remaining environment of actions, which is outside the interrelated relations within this defined network.

The *actions* of an issue-based network refers to the events in which the actors combine, develop, exchange or create resources by taking advantage of the joint assets of the network and the actors in it. The collective actions, which need *common resources* for their implementation are typical for issue-based networks.

The issues that such networks take up are health, child welfare, environment, education, debt, tribal etc. E.g.'s of such networks are FECOFUN in Nepal, VHAI in India who looks into health, NAFRE, NACDOR AND NCDHR who look into issues of children, education, dalit and human rights in India.

(B) Area / region specific networks

The emergence of this type of network is a very recent phenomenon, although regional / state-level federations/associations have existed in some pockets. But after experiencing broad-based national networks, many regional and state-level networks were formed by voluntary organizations with almost similar objectives and structures. Area / region specific networks can also be issue based or ideological networks.

(C) Ideological networks

In South Asia's socio-political arena, certain ideologies play a prominent role such as Gandhian, Marxist, extreme leftists like Naxalites, religious groups like that of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Different ideologies have tried and are still trying their level best to make voluntary organizations to follow them, or to bring them out on a common platform. There was a time when the Gandhian and Christian groups were dominating the voluntary sector in India but after the *Sampurna Kranti* movement led by Shri Jai Prakash Narayan and the failure of the Naxalite movement, a large chunk from them were attracted to the voluntary sector. Later, many of them formed loose networks to coordinate and organize their activities. These types of network are not so effective in South Asia because their primary objective is alien to voluntarism. Moreover, they promote a certain ideology, which again is against the very spirit of voluntary action.

(D) Funder-led or funder-driven networks

In South Asia, a large number of international funding agencies are actively working and providing financial assistance to voluntary

organisations. Some of them have their offices in the region with a number of branch offices. In the past, these agencies, especially those with offices in the region, tried to bring their "partners" on a common platform to monitor their activities. Similarly, national funding agencies (government and non-government) also tried to set-up nodal agencies to plan, organize, implement and monitor activities supported by them.

These nodal agencies also worked like networks. Experience shows that these types of network do not last long because voluntary agencies associate themselves with such networks only for getting financial support. They do not try out any working relationship with the members.

These types of networks mostly do not like their member organisations to get associated with other funding agencies. Some of them even dictate their terms to voluntary organisations. It often forces voluntary organisations to ultimately disassociate themselves from them.

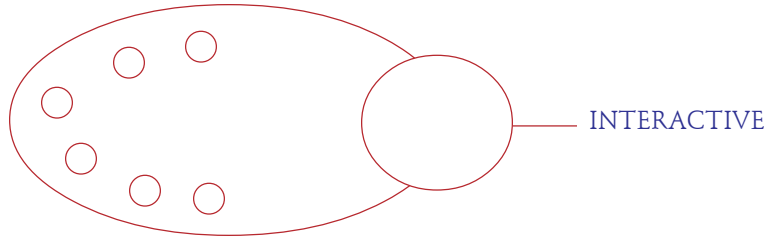
(E) Broad-based network

Broad-based networking emerges out of the realization that all issues or problems are interrelated with each other and one cannot expect a positive result just by addressing one problem in isolation. These forms of broad-based networks have members from all regions, states, and ideologies. In the recent past, some of the issue-based national networks also tried to address other important issues other than their own but their constraints such as objectives and structures did not allow them to work on such issues on a sustained basis. Broad based networks address all issues, problems, and constraints in a holistic manner.

E.g. of such broad based networks are VANI of India, NGO Federation of Nepal, ADAB of Bangladesh etc.

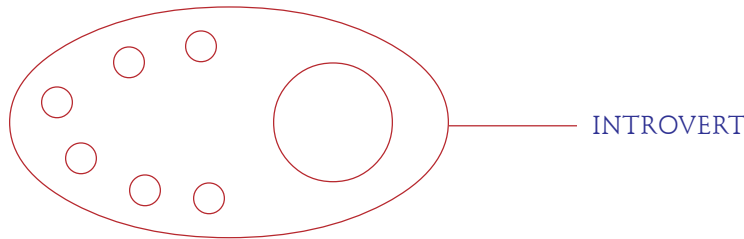
All of these five types of networks can be clearly said to be of one of the three types as mentioned below:

1. Interactive: A network whose activity has absolute relevance to the environment and is addressing a critical issue in relation to the



environment has a strong bondage is an interactive network. It really assesses the environment before taking up an issue.

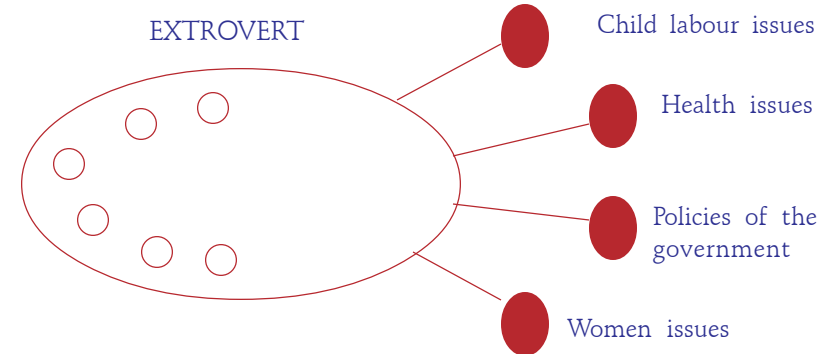
2. Introvert : It might happen that some networks keep on doing some activities without really understanding or assessing the environment like an amoeba eating up something. They are introvert networks and manipu-



late information system to justify than perform/keep things within themselves. Even during the review of what they are doing they manipulate their own information in such a manner to prove that they are relevant. *They waste a lot of their energy justifying their action rather than performing.* If it is a sensitive network it will immediately do an assessment of the environment and take up a relevant issue and turn itself into an interactive network.

3. Extrovert: The third kind of network is extrovert and is so craving for relationship and attention that they are not satisfied with one programme. They do not allow any relationship to grow. The relationship becomes enduring. They go on changing issues and after some time start bloating and fail to manage or perform properly.

Here also there is a waste of energy and the network goes on justifying for their dispersed action. So priority has to be selected after studying



the environment and issues and its relevance to the mission of the network.

But only taking up issues, which are relevant to the present context, would not serve the purpose. Taking up issues, which are relevant as well as, consistent to the mission is more important. A network may take up ten types of programmes but it is important to see how consistent these programmes are with the vision-mission of the network and how do they link up the programmes with appropriate strategies so that it gives effectiveness to attain their mission.

These networks too follow two concepts in operations namely intensive and extensive.

In intensive networking prerequisites are consistent and regular, communication, responsive behaviour, responsibility and trust. When responsive behaviour, responsibility and trust come together it brings solidarity. Intensive networking promotes solidarity and internal strength.

Extensive networking does not end with its members only, but promotes open-ended relationships. For extensive networking proper strategy is required depending upon the perspective. Extensive networking takes place in an unpredictable environment and as and when it comes.

Dynamics / Challenges before Networks

Based on the experiences of most of the existing networks, it has been discovered that many of them are facing certain dilemmas or challenges that must be addressed collectively for their continued

effectiveness. The following are the commonly identified dilemmas or challenges facing networks in the contemporary setting.

(a) Participation versus Responsibility

Members of a network are always interested to participate in it for getting news, opinion or experiences from others but they generally hesitate to take any responsibility on behalf of the network. Networks should be a collective process where member participation and responsibility must go hand in hand.

(b) Coordination versus Control

There is a very fine balance between coordination and control and networks should not attempt to control its members or their activities. By definition, members of networks remain autonomous and a network should only ensure communication across its members or all those who are directly or indirectly associated with it. Generally control takes place in the network, where members are weak and the secretariat is strong therefore continuous effort should be made to develop the capacities of the members and secretariat accountable to the members and the elected board.

(c) Linkage between the Individual and the Institution

There are two issues related with this dilemma: first, the person as an individual member versus the institutional membership; and second, a person in an organizational membership (usually the chief functionary) versus involving the whole institution as member organization. Networks have enormous potential to enlist individuals as members based on their interest, commitment and resources on the issues being addressed by the network. But at the same time, resources for continuing an ongoing campaign also require institutional support; therefore both individuals and institutions are equally important. Oftentimes ideas, experiences and energies are brought together by individuals within the network but without the support, backing and commitment of their institutions, thus making it impossible to sustain a campaign. Therefore it should be the responsibility of member organizations to involve their institution for the furtherance of the network objectives, which seem to lack in most of the networks. Similarly the secretariat of the network should know the member organizations very well, including their staff,

capacity, resources and mode of functioning. Only then will they be able to relate with the institution.

(d) Information versus Action

Information is to be shared in order to promote further action. Networks share information with their members or partners with an expectation that members will act upon that information. However, this is not always the case. Members expect from networks that all information must be shared with them but hardly take any initiative to act upon the information shared with them. Similarly a network secretariat receives a lot of information from members without having any idea of what to do with such information.

After a period of time, if members find that the secretariat is not using their information to further their objectives, they would stop sending information to the secretariat and vice-versa.

(e) Focus versus Inclusion

Issue-based networks are generally much focused. The dilemma arises when they draw only those who are interested in that particular theme and work in a particular manner. Consequently, other organizations get excluded although they are very influential and are very good in advocacy efforts. Whereas broad-based networks have an inherent capacity especially in their character to draw a wide spectrum of members and people with varied interests and issues, the members want their network to address their issue on a priority basis. This results in the network addressing dozens of issues simultaneously and in turn losing its focus. This is the strategic choice that every network has to make to depend on its overall purpose.

(f) Process versus Structure

Networking is a process as well as an activity to achieve certain goals; therefore, focus should always be on that process. It is a fact that institutionalization of networks is needed to sustain that process but the institution's structure should not hinder its primary function. The structure should be there to facilitate the networking process rather than hindering it. Therefore keeping a balance between process and the structure is a challenge before most of the networks.

Case No. 1: Large structure but poor efficiency

FECOFUN is an autonomous, non-partisan, socially inclusive, non-profit organization. A national federation of forest users, which advocates for community forestry user group rights, locally, nationally, and regionally. FECOFUN's membership stands at about 5 million people. This comprises rural based farmers - men, women, old, and young - from almost all of Nepal's 75 districts. Since its establishment in 1995, FECOFUN has been instrumental in representing concerns of community forestry user groups in deliberations about policy formulations and forest futures.

It is Nepal's largest civil society organization having units / infrastructure from the national level to the sub-district level with a focus on gender justice. Such networks are very effective in mobilizing people at large. It is a network having a highly decentralized organizational structure. Representation starts from the bottom-up, with decisions taken at local-level user group assemblies.

Each user group holds an assembly of its forest users to select representatives for Village FECOFUN and Range Post FECOFUN. Range Post-level representatives then select District-level representatives. From a nationwide pool of District-level representatives, National Executive committee (NEC) members are elected for five year tenures.

This heavy dependence on its top management and its huge structure prevalent at all levels of the state, from small cells in villages to those at the block, district and finally at the national level has inhibited the development of new talents and expertise. It has also prevented any development of a sense of purpose, ownership and accountability among the members. Workers are given firm guidelines and are trained to only draw within them. Most of the productive time of workers is usually spent on organising meetings as in the pyramidal structure of the organization's management, collating the groups and process controls forms a majority of the work style.

Thus it has trapped the network in a spiral of bureaucratism and prevented real efficiency to come through which is the unfeigned aspiration of the network.

Lessons learnt:

- * Structure should be appropriate as per the needs and requirements of the network and should be in line with their mission and vision.
- * The process should not dominate the outcome.

(g) Working on an Issue in a Sustained Manner versus Inclusion of New Issues and Challenges

With changing socio-economic and political scenarios, new challenges are bound to emerge. If networks want to remain relevant for their partners and members, it should take up new emerging issues and challenges and work on them. Similarly old issues, which have become important for the sector and got integrated into the functioning of a large number of member organisations should be dropped from the network agenda. Otherwise it will be difficult to concentrate on the new issues and challenges. Dilemma arises in a network's secretariat as they have to develop capacities to address emerging issues on a regular basis or to look for other avenues to further their interest, capacity and skill. Management also faces the dilemma on how to retain their staff. Therefore it is found that the staff turn over rate (especially professional) is very high in broad based networks. The point at which an old issue is to be dropped and when and how to take up new issues is another major challenge before networks.

(h) Static versus Rotating Leadership

In some networks, leaders remain unchanged because of their personality, acceptability, and linkages or there is no space for others. This has been an experience that, unless a person dies or vanishes from the scenario, the change of leadership does not take place. This results in members losing interest because they find that they will never get an opportunity to lead the network. In a rotating leadership system, new leaders bring fresh perspectives, innovation and dynamism in the networking process. In a healthy network, every member should feel that some day they would also get an opportunity to provide leadership. Frequent changes in leadership also create problems and sometimes continuity gets disrupted, therefore ideally few from the board must relinquish their position at a regular interval to provide space for others.

(i) Solidarity versus Programmatic Action

In a crisis situation, it has been found that members don't find ways for providing solidarity to the affected person or institution.

But if a network decides to do a programmatic action in support of a person, institution or an issue, members back out at that moment because of the fear of retaliation from those who are harassing, intimidating that particular member organization, either through local vested interests or the governmental machinery. This is not a healthy development and affirmative course of action is needed to set the course right. The dilemma is that, in their crisis every member/ expects that all network members would stand solidly behind them, but in the crisis of others, they themselves back out from addressing the issue or extending solidarity.

(j) Gender

Gender issues are often still forgotten as a core element to consider in planning, reflection and learning about joint advocacy initiatives. Often the leadership of networks is male, and women's rights are missing from the agenda, completely.

Conscious adoption of a gender sensitive approach can help to counter this. This essentially means: a) paying attention to gender balance in the governance system and participatory processes of the network; b) using "gender lenses" to guide reflection and strategizing in day-to-day debate within the network. ■

C H A P T E R

3

Roles and Responsibilities of Networks: Managerial Roles

Roles and Responsibilities of Networks: Managerial Roles

Setting up a network and later, managing and developing them are hard work. More often than not, the amount of work and time spent in establishing a network is completely underestimated. Things often go wrong during the very first step and lots of networks perish because of improper management.

The Managerial Role of a network

Networks will only achieve good results if they are committed to professional management. Effective management is not complicated. Rather it has a lot to do with basic simple practices often overlooked.

Despite the benefits, building and maintaining a network is hard work. Network members must keep in mind the following areas and be prepared to address them in a systematic manner

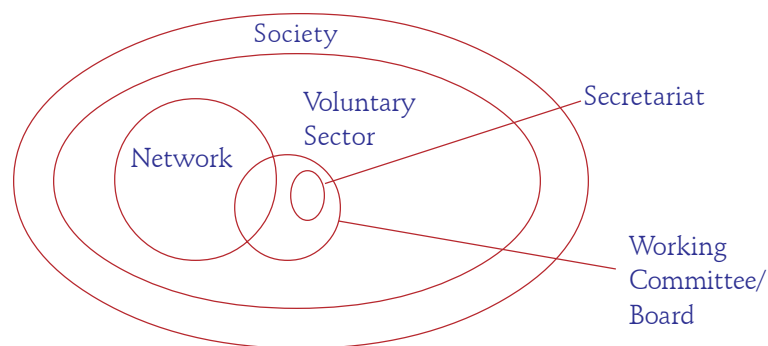
The following are the managerial roles of a network:

- ❑ Secretariat Management
- ❑ Membership Management
- ❑ Staff Management
- ❑ Structure and systems Management
- ❑ Culture and climate Management
- ❑ Leadership Management
- ❑ Governance Management

A. Secretariat Management

A secretariat is a place from where the work of a network is coordinated and various services to the members are provided.

The secretariat is an important component of the structure of a



network. There is a great deal of concern about the secretariat functioning as an organization or as a part of the whole networking process. But first the need of the secretariat is to be understood.

The need for the secretariat are as follows:

1. Secretariat is required to facilitate the process of networking
2. Secretariat is also necessary for the coordination between the members and other actors of society
3. Communication within and outside the network is done through the secretariat
4. There is a need to have an address through which the network can receive information from outside and also communicate with its members
5. Secretariat is also needed to build linkage with various actors of society while pursuing the mission of the network
6. The function of information collection, analysis, dissemination and documentation can only be performed when there is a space / system for it. Thus the secretariat provides the space / system to collect, analyze, distribute and maintain the database for use. It also acts as a platform for exchange of ideas and information.

7. The secretariat carries out and implements whatever responsibilities the general body assigns to the governing body thus making the task of the governing body easier.
8. Developing and administering the budgets and producing relevant financial reports for audit purposes.
9. Organizing meetings, workshops, events etc.
10. Interacting with donor organisations, government agencies and other groups.
11. Coordinating committee meetings.
12. Implementing and coordinating training courses and workshops.
13. Organizing external reviews of network programmes.
14. Sourcing and disbursing, where appropriate and with due consultation, funding for network activities and projects.
15. Promoting the network and conservation regionally and internationally.
16. Last but not least is providing services to the members of the network.

The above can be classified under three broad heads:

Sharing : Information of the member organisations and also of the sector. Sharing of resources – not necessarily monetary but infrastructural, human, capacities of the members, their experiences, expertise within the member organisations.

Servicing: The Secretariat provides its services through providing information to the members and the sector, by rendering support to the members and any voluntary activists at the time of crisis, by facilitating the process of framing an issue of national importance for advocacy and lobbying, by protecting the members and also other voluntary activists in the sector from outside forces or vested interests, by building linkages with various sectors of society; like media, corporate sector, government, political parties etc., by providing consultancy services to its members, by coordinating the process of capacity building of the members of the networks and by providing guidance to others

Influencing: Policy Makers (State governments, foreign donors), other sectors, structure and system of institutions like the World Bank, IMF, WTO etc., societal attitude and behaviour

From the above it seems that the roles and responsibilities of a network are carried out by the secretariat and the members have no role to play. Here the dilemma arises. There should be a functional segregation of roles and responsibilities of the secretariat. If a secretariat visualizes and performs all the roles mentioned above, it starts functioning as a super organization, starts controlling the members and gradually disintegration of the network takes place.

It is often observed in reality that the Executive Secretary or the CEO in a network becomes so powerful that s/he nominates the chairperson, the treasurer and the governing body members, which is constitutionally, morally and ethically wrong. This can only happen when the involvement of members becomes less and the secretariat starts functioning as an organization. The secretariat is a part of the network structure and cannot be seen in isolation.

When a network is carrying out any kind of advocacy function the secretariat plays a role of coordinating, facilitating, data collection, preparing background material after analyzing the data. Network members are directly involved in advocacy or lobbying because this function is beyond the capacity of the secretariat. All the above-mentioned functions clearly show that the secretariat is facilitating the functions of the governing body.

Though the secretariat is said to be collecting information and disseminating the same it is not necessary that all the members are dependent upon the secretariat for information. In a network few members have very good relations and communication between themselves. They share their information regularly. But there are other organizations who are not linked and do not get the opportunity to share information. Here the secretariat has an important role to play of disseminating information, which has been collected from its own members, and from other sources. The secretariat not only shares information but also facilitates the process of sharing information from among its members and other organizations of the sector.

The capacity of the networks lies with its members. Without the members the secretariat is 'zero'. *The skill of the secretariat can be identified as how effectively it channelises the capacity of its members towards the process of networking.*

Important ingredients of the secretariat.

For effective functioning, the secretariat should possess certain components. These are:

- ❑ Capacity to effectively implement the decisions taken by the general body and the Board
- ❑ Adequate infrastructure to function
- ❑ Adequate finance or resources to support the infrastructure and programmes
- ❑ Adequate manpower or staff to implement the decisions

The policy decisions are taken by the general body of a network, which are fine tuned by the governing board and the secretariat, facilitate the implementing process. Fund raising must be always in the hands of the board and not in the hands of the secretariat, otherwise domination is bound to emerge. But only through fund raising and implementing programmes there is a danger of the secretariat becoming too powerful a body, overpowering the general body or the Board. If the general members are not active in planning, implementing and monitoring then obviously all the responsibilities fall on the secretariat and it is bound to become powerful.

All networks have to have an active general body whose role is to take policy decisions in consistency with the formulated vision and mission. This is the body of governance. The general body leads to the executive committee or the governing body, which consists of, many members, elected or nominated and is the management body.

The executive committee / working committee / governing board prepares the plan of implementation of the policy decisions taken by the general body and guides the secretariat in fine-tuning or implementing. The executive committee has the secretariat to facilitate and coordinate the implementation process. The secretariat is thus ac-

countable to the executive committee.

The secretariat cannot report to the general body by bypassing the working committee or the executive committee. This can lead to politics within the network. So in the structuring process we should ensure 'who reports to whom'. Otherwise the secretariat will be loaded with too much of heavy work and will either become dysfunctional or become too powerful to bypass the executive committee or to manipulate the general body.

One of the concepts of management function is the system of delegation and accountability. A network might delegate certain activities to someone (either a member or secretariat) but that does not necessarily mean that those who are legally assigned for the work get absolved from the responsibility.

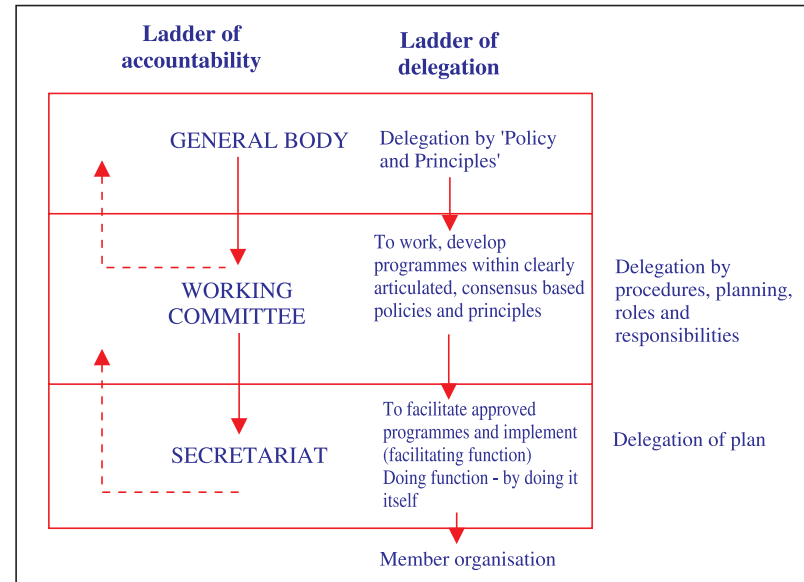
That particular body or individual will be ultimately responsible or accountable for the action. If that particular individual or body claim that the responsibility has been delegated and they are not accountable they are actually running away from the responsibility and that is **abdication**.

If we prepare a ladder of delegation and simultaneously a ladder of accountability, lots of problems regarding the confusion in roles and responsibilities will get solved.

In a network the general body delegates the working committee / governing body / executive committee to work within certain clearly articulated and consensus based policies and principles. At this level the policies are very broad and not too specific.

By consensus we mean when everybody is given a chance to express their opinion and then an appropriate decision is taken so that no organization feels that they are neglected. But when all stay together then that something is right and is termed as unanimity.

The working committee / governing body / executive committee delegates the secretariat to prepare a detailed plan of action as per the guidelines of the general body and keeping in view the skills / capacities / structure and system etc. to facilitate approved programmes for implementation. Here consultation is required to further specify the approved programmes. This becomes the facilitating function of the secretariat.



But again there are some doing functions of a secretariat. Ideas and other such contributions made by partner and member organisations are converted at the secretariat and synthesized into programmes and action plans.

For both the functions the secretariat is accountable to the constituency who has delegated the functions i.e. the working committee / governing body / executive committee. The working committee then reports to the general body and is accountable to the Governing Body.

If the principles are not very well defined in the ladder the programmes also cannot be very well articulated and there will be a lot of commotion.

The first order of delegation is 'delegation of policy' whereas the next delegation is the delegation by procedures, plans, roles and responsibilities. This reflects the true content of the programme of a network.

Being accountable does not only deal with the question of power. It also means that *there is a demand placed on the network to communicate to others, that the task(s) assigned to it have been accomplished and to what degree.*

Accountability is determined through reporting or reviewing how far the work is in consistency with the vision-mission. Generally the governing body or the working committee can be the convenor of such a review.

The ladder of delegation and accountability will differ from network to network depending upon their structure. If the terms and conditions are well mentioned in the ladder of delegation, the accountability part becomes easy.

The important aspect is not the ladder. The ladder is built obviously following the values and vision and are the sources for policy advocacy. They will definitely determine the delegation by policy and principles. And the delegation by policy and principles will determine the delegation by procedures, plan and role. Some collective processes have to be taken up to get policies and principles from the values and mission. The process may be one that the Governing body or the General Body Meeting or whatever the network decides to do.

The important thing is that if the ladder of delegation is taking place in such a manner over a period of time consistently and also the ladder of accountability is maintained consistently through periodic review etc. then it will lead to what is generally known as institutionalization – institutionalization of values and vision through policies and principles translated into certain action plans, rules and regulations. Internalization of the same can be done but it happens at the individual level and aggregate of internalization would lead to institutionalization, which is more organizational.

Mechanism and procedures as mentioned above can be created in individual networks to manage the confusion of roles and responsibilities and accountability. This will also lead to the end of confusion regarding the role of the secretariat and its need in a network.

B. Membership Management

In a network one has to learn how to cope with the diversity of knowledge, skills and experiences, attitudes etc. of the members. One needs to keep the communication channel open, friendly, available in a feeling of partnership and commitment to the purpose of the network.

There are various membership management problems of individual networks namely:

- Participation versus ownership
- Diverse expectations of members
- Conflict management
- Membership Criteria
- Domination of few
- Values
- Levels of learning

(a) Participation : Ownership

It is often seen from general experience that members participate in programmes but do not take up responsibility. The participation many a times is limited to seeking other's help and services as opposed to sharing one's own. This happens only when there is no sense of ownership among the members and their unwillingness to take up responsibilities. If the members are involved in the process of translating the vision-mission into programmes and plans and also have clarity about the roles then they would take interest and participate in the decision making process and programmes. It also depends upon how effectively the secretariat and the leader involve the members in the various kinds of activities.

The member organisations have their individual setup, priorities, targets and goals to be achieved. Their roles and responsibilities within the organization often do not necessarily match with those of the network. Often their objectives do not match with that of the network and so they become answerable to the board and various stakeholders. Thus their participation in such programmes gets restricted.

A network often takes a political stand on some issue, which might hurt the political or administrative systems of the state. For a small member organization to get involved in that process and take a stand could sometimes prove to be critical because there are chances of getting victimized and / or attacked by the state machinery. Thus

sometimes the members cannot participate on behalf of their own organization in programmes even if the issue is of utmost importance to them, but they do so as individual members of the network.

The sense of ownership comes only from action. Involving the members in all the processes gradually builds the sense of ownership among them.

Ownership is a product of trust / commitment. Trust is persistent support or dependency. Trust is built over a period of time and is a variable and function of persistent support. And persistent support depends upon time and personal worldview.

(b) Diverse expectations of the members

The members of a network have diverse expectations from the network itself, but often tend to overlook the dearth of their contribution towards the network be it in terms of monetary resource, skills or expertise. For a network's sustenance the process should be a two-way process of contribution and receipt of contribution from a network.

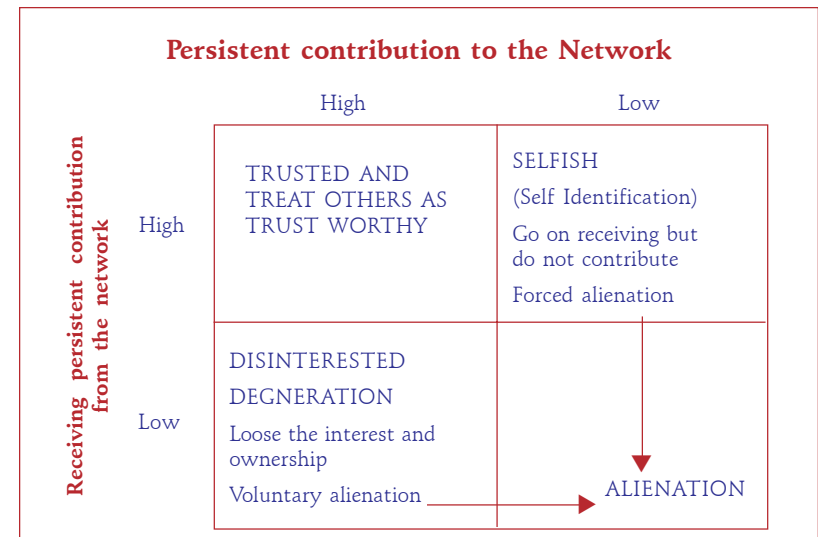
One variable in networking is persistent contribution to the network. Contribution in the form of information, money, infrastructure, idea, skill and capacity. Another important variable is receiving persistent contribution from the network.

If in a network people persistently contribute and persistently receive contribution they will be trusted and will treat others as trustworthy. This will give a synergistic climate to the network. Here ownership is not a problem.

If a member goes on persistently receiving from a network but does not contribute towards the network over a period of time then that particular member becomes selfish. Here ownership will not come up and there will be more of 'self-identification'. The member is identifying his own self-interest rather than the common interest. Here the member might enjoy his position for sometime until others read his motive and stop contributing to him / her.

In the third case when a member is persistently contributing to the network but not receiving from the network the member will lose the sense of interest and ownership. At one point of time they will stop contributing to the network and the network tends to lose a trusted member because it treated him untrustworthy.

When the member neither contributes nor receives any contribution then he becomes alienated. Both disinterested and selfish members might end up becoming alienated. So it is very important to treat these people, involve them and persistently ask them / confront them for certain help. This is the dynamics behind the trust we often talk about. Trust is how frequently, how predictably and how persistently the network keeps on extending support to the members.



(c) Conflict Management

The term 'conflict' invariably gives us a negative perception in our mind. But in an organizational context conflict often seems as an opportunity / source of creative solution.

When members with different experiences, backgrounds, attitudes, points of view, values, needs, expectations and personalities come together and interact, a variety of differences often develop, and conflicts and differences are sometimes suppressed and not openly

discussed. Permanent resolution of all conflict is not possible, but it is possible to manage differences more or less effectively.

Conflict is often inherent in certain situations where ultimately shared goals must be achieved. Differences on the organizational or network's issues should be indicative of a healthy network. If the members of a network do not strongly feel about their views and differences, then there should be serious doubts about their commitment towards the network.

The real cause for the conflict needs to be understood, their positive and negative contributions to be assessed to the networks' stated goals and strategies and has to be highlighted to the parties in conflict.

The following ways can be used to deal with conflicts:

Avoiding: Withdraw from conflict situation, leaving it to chance

Smoothing: Generally covering up the differences and claim that things are fine

Bargaining: Negotiate to arrive at a compromise and bargain for gains

Problem Solving: Confront the differences and resolve them on a collective basis.

A problem solving approach implies open recognition and acceptance of different positions and a willingness to change one's position. It is a threatening process but open resolution often creates possibilities for creativity and higher acceptance.

(d) Membership Criteria

Often a network starts growing up in terms of its size when many organizations join. Controlling the size of the member organisations becomes very difficult and often democratic functioning is disrupted. The large size of the members are also practically not manageable. If the networks have some kind of articulated membership criteria based on values they believe in, this problem can be tackled to some extent. Membership will be granted to only those organisations who have a shared understanding of the values and wish to uphold the values stated in the network. Sustaining the members also can be managed through constant interaction with the members and by involving them in various works.

A membership criteria often exists only in structured / formal networks. In case of informal networks no such criteria exists.

There are primarily four advantages of the membership:

- ❑ **United Voice:** This is seen as vital to strengthen establish unity of voice on key issues – to live the vision and values.
- ❑ **Enhanced National and Global Recognition**
- ❑ **International Connection:** The world is changing and globalization encourages connections among organisations.
- ❑ **Flexibility and Choice:** Networks need sufficient flexibility to broaden their connections / relationships with international and national organisations and thus better serve their individual members / associations.

The disadvantages of having criteria for membership include:

- ❑ increased need of resources to support members
- ❑ too many shared voices
- ❑ increased potential for conflict among partners / members
- ❑ incremental change may not meet future needs.

(e) Domination by few

It is often observed in a network that few members dominate the decision making process over the others. This becomes possible when there is some kind of dependency of the network on those groups of members. Here the members easily start dominating the decision making process and the network continues to be dominated fearing that the support will be withdrawn. The dependency is not necessarily in terms of monetary resource but even in terms of skill, connections, experience and any other form of resources.

The other kind of domination can be positive in the sense that those members who can perfectly articulate their thoughts and ideas influence the decision making process towards the achievement of the stated goals and objectives. This is never in disfavor of the network and can be accepted.

A network should always see to it if there is any kind of domination from the members, which does not favor any individual interest but is beneficial to the interest of the network.

Case No. 2: Domination by few

NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) is a national umbrella organization of NGOs, established for the promotion and protection of social justice, human rights and fair development. It is an autonomous and politically non-partisan organization, run by the representatives of NGOs. It is actively involved in lobbying and advocacy and also for developing linkages among NGOs, INGOs and GOs.

In case of the NGO Federation in Nepal it had started as a real federation in which all shades of people and organisations were active members. Due to secret ballot paper election of the Board, canvassing started taking place on political lines and the sector got divided accordingly.

After increasing influence of the left party in Nepal, left dominated NGOs became powerful. They captured almost all the important posts in the Board and due to that many strategically strong NGO's started to withdraw from it.

Today only a minuscule minority allied to any other forms of government are part of the NGO Federation. Thus those who were not affiliated to any party or bent towards their leftist viewpoint were disregarded or turned a nelson's eye to. This forced these members to leave the federation.

If we look at the case of ADAB, we can see that if the members of NFN do not move away from the political scene they may soon be dragged into it. The allegiance of maximum members is to one party and if that party does not come to power or does not have substantial majority then there could be the retaliation that ADAB had faced from the incoming government which could thus spell disaster to NFN.

Lessons learnt:

- * To influence politics is a good thing but to be in the stream of politicking can lead to disastrous results.
- * Politics makes only fair weather friends and if NFN is not careful it may lead to a mass exodus of right spirited workers.

(f) Values

In a network people from various organizations come together. They all have a set of differing values, principles, working styles, point of views etc. It is important for one to strike a balance between the values, principles and make them work in harmony towards the achievement of the goals of the network. One should also see the degree of convergence of the individuals' value with the networks value. Managing the shared understanding of values by the members and upholding the values of the network is indeed an issue of Human Resource Management in the sense that if a network cannot make the members imbibe the values they believe in, the network will gradually degenerate.

By definition 'no values are good and no values are bad, but all values are good for those who value them. When somebody does something consistently over a period of time it becomes a value to that person. Values – good or bad depend upon the societal function. If society accepts it, then it is a good value and if not then it is a bad value. Certain values are universal while certain values are society specific.

Some persons are identified by values and we say that the person is value-driven.

There is a difference between value and behaviour. All behaviour of an individual may not be his value. Behaviour is an individual's spontaneous response to a situation. Values are something which binds individuals in a society, whereas certain behaviour tends to break societal bondage. All the individuals' values are reflected in behaviour. Behaviour is the summation of someone's action.

In the networking context whatever we believe and whatever we do, when we do it consistently for years it becomes the network's values. We adhere to a set of values and preach them in an organization. When someone joins a network and has a personal set of values, which differ from the networks core values, he becomes an absolute misfit to the organization. So during the process of granting membership to any organization the governing board or any such body should see to it that whether the values of the organization are somewhat compatible to the values of the network.

In an organization two processes are practiced to imbibe the values: **Internalization** and **Institutionalization**. The same will also be applicable to a network. In a network there are a set of core values, which all individual members need to know first. The members will practice only when they are aware. When the individuals' value has certain commonality with the value of the organization they become partners.

If some members do not have any common values then the process of internalization can be taken up through discussing, reading, doing some value audit and other such activities. This is a very informal process and inward directed and is the first device. Value audit helps us to identify what values need to be promoted, where the gap exists etc.

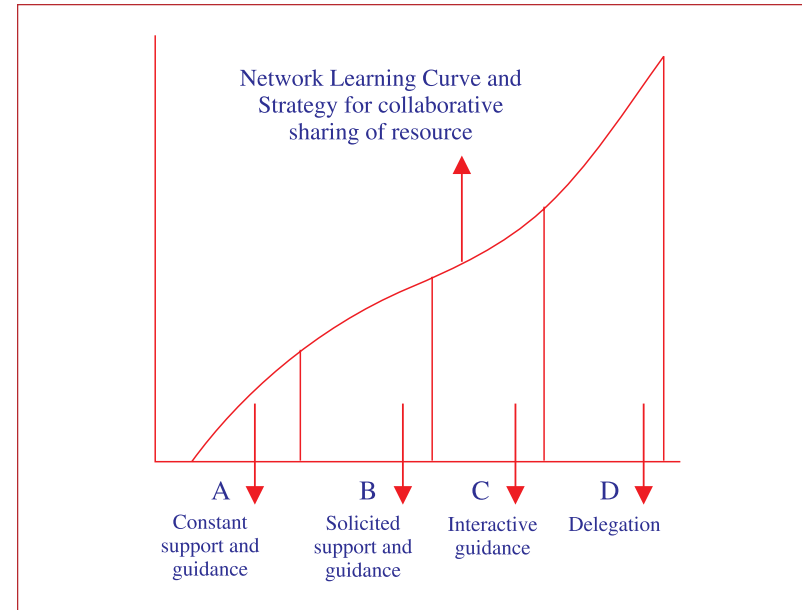
The process of institutionalization should be the last resort. It is the rules or regulations or code of conduct directing the way we are expected to act or behave which might result in a kind of transformation of values. For this a set of rules are also required to deal with the deviation from the set.

The process of internalization is 'accepting some values individually'. It is a part of our personality and starts from self. The network has a conscious role to play for the initiation of the process internalization. Whereas institutionalization is when the values have been accepted or agreed upon become a part of the network. Internalization and Institutionalization are not two different processes and one leads to the other. If the members of a network internalize the values, the network will automatically reflect it.

(g) Levels of learning

In a network different members are in different planes of learning. One has to identify within a learning curve in which stage of learning does the member organization lie.

In a networking institution one should never assume that all are in an equal platform or plane in regards to their competencies and skills. Some member organisations are in section A of the curve. They are new and in constant need of support and guidance / instruction.



If we start giving constant support to the members who are at Stage 'B' in human dynamics this will be treated as 'intruding'. Here the degree of guidance should be solicited guidance otherwise the network will tend to hurt the ego profile of the member.

When the member organization reaches to section 'C' of the curve they are almost ready to give support and they learn very fast and become very capable. So here the guidance will be interactive guidance.

The fourth kind of members who lie in 'D' section of the learning curve are independent and do not worry about anything. The network should delegate some kind of role to these members.

Things start falling apart in a network when we start overdoing something in case of members in 'D' and under-doing in case of members who are in 'A'.

So before going in for any of these methods, mapping of the members and staffs in the learning curve can be an effective strategy.

C. Staff Management

Human Resource Management deals with human beings as resources and their management. Management in the traditional context is a control function : *how to retain people; place them in the right positions; induct them at the right time; give them the right kind of functions to perform; so that they can become effective in the long run and deliver the best.*

In Human Resource Development the approach to human beings is not seen from the point of controlling them but from the point of their development. For e.g. In case of performance management : from the management point of view there is a need to see who is doing good work, who is not, how to reward a person, how to serve a charge sheet etc. and some kind of control mechanism is always present here. But from the human resource point of view, performance evaluation is done to identify the weaknesses and then try to see what systems and structures should be devised so that the person performs effectively.

In networks Human Resource Management will address the management of the secretariat staff and the management of individual members. A combination of all resources of the member organisations is the resource of the network.

As a fundamental principle of Human Resource Development Management '*Each human being or individual has a limitless potential to perform anything and each individual can be groomed. Nobody is useless in an organization*'.

The following are the common ingredients of Human Resource Management:

- ❑ Value integration into the staff
- ❑ Lack of committed personnel
- ❑ Development of human resource systems for enhancing of capacities
- ❑ Management of job description and time
- ❑ Human resource retention

1. Value integration into the staff

Values are enduring beliefs that influence staff members' opinions,

attitudes, actions and the choices and decisions they make. Values are formed and experienced in a social and cultural context. As individuals, staff member's values are shaped by personal beliefs and as public servants, they are shaped by the traditions of our democratic system of government.

Ethics reflect how the staff members apply their values in everyday activities and relate to that dimension of thought and behaviour, which is guided by standards, and principles of right conduct. It involves a commitment to do the right thing.

Together, values and ethics contribute to the foundations of sound decision-making, which is essential in order to achieve better results. Clearly defined values and ethics are important because they provide a context for the choices and decisions the staff members make.

Benefits of a values-based organization

Integrating shared values into the workplace yields key benefits:

- **A productive work environment**, with fewer complaints, grievances or disrespectful behaviour.
- **Modern management practices** based on sound principles, with a high degree of autonomy, empowered decision making and a range of values-based choices.
- **Greater organizational commitment**, leading to closer cooperation in the workplace and enhanced corporate citizenship.
- **Increased organizational effectiveness** as a result of improved morale, cooperation, job satisfaction, retention and recruitment.
- **Reduced ethical risk** as a result of a proactive approach to ethics rather than reactive crisis management.

2. Lack of committed personnel

In the context of a network a member or a staff being committed means that the member / staff is morally dedicated to the cause of the network. Commitment is a very important component in a network. A member who is committed towards the values and works of a network will contribute to his / her fullest capability for achieving the

stated goals. Whereas a member or a staff can also harm the networks interest when s/he is not committed and misuses the network towards his / her personal gain.

Here being committed does not necessarily mean that the person cannot be a professional. It is often observed that a person who is too committed towards his / her work cannot achieve the target in a required time.

Whereas a professional, who is generally bothered about the task and is not sensitive towards the values, finishes the task within the stipulated time. In today's context time is an important element and also a deciding factor for the impact that a network is going to have on the external environment. Again without the personnel's commitment towards the cause the network cannot have the desired results. So a balanced mix of both these qualities are essential in a network.

A person has to be committed towards his / her work and towards the values or the cause for which the network exists. Building commitment is a process oriented method and takes its own time to be internalized. Commitment cannot be built in a day and needs proper grooming, regular guidance and discussions to understand the dimensions of commitment. Commitment is essentially an inward directed component.

3. Development of human resource systems for enhancing of capacities

According to Dennis C. Kinlaw, if we put 15% additional or less time and energy to our current job our supervisor cannot identify that. So we have a discretionary time and energy of 30% with which we can play around without being identified by our supervisor. There is a difference between satisfactory performance and superior performance. In an organizational context when we talk of human beings we generally talk of satisfactory performance. If the performance is 70% we say it is satisfactory.

We are generally not concerned about superior performance. When we talk of superior performance the discretionary 30% is taken into account and also how to engage and motivate the people so that they

produce 100%.

Commitment is the gap between our potential to perform and our existing performance. If a person is committed he will give superior performance, or else he will settle himself for the 70%.

There are many ways to enhance performance in the personnel. The most important of them according to Dennis C. Kinlaw is coaching.

By coaching he means 4 specific elements through which the performance of the individual and organization can be enhanced. They are :

Confronting: By asking the member or the individual staff the reasons for not performing upto the mark and also resolving problems if any.

Counseling: Through discussions the network can try and bring about some differences in performance.

Mentoring: To enhance performance this step can also be undertaken.

Tutoring : Through arranging proper training and making them skillful and improving their performance.

This is also applicable in the networks. The network leader can choose any of these four steps or a combination of these to enhance the performance and bring motivation within the members and the staff.

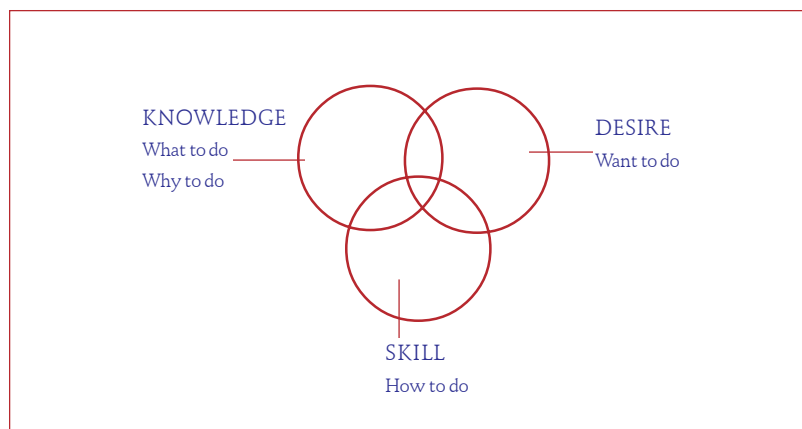
The network leader can also in order to help the development of human resources:

- choose to hire only the required skilled staff
- enhance capacities of the current staff through exposure(s), in-house training, workshops etc.

Lack of skill and effectiveness

When we talk about a lack of skill within a network we mean that in totality the network does not have the required skills to perform the kinds of activities they have taken up.

From the theoretical point of view, effectiveness is the intersection of three elements : Knowledge, Skill and Desire.



Knowledge is about ‘what to do’ and ‘why to do’ and is related to the head of the body, which does the understanding function. Skill is about how to do and can we do it or not and is related to the hands which performs the function. Desire is related to the heart and deals with whether we want to do it or not and in what degree. If in a network or an organization any one of these elements is missing the effectiveness of the network shall be jeopardized.

So when we talk about a lack of skill we presume that we have the required knowledge base and the desire to perform certain functions. We need to have complete knowledge on those areas where we are working. In a network we also need to do a mapping of what kind of skills are available with the individual members or staff of the network, what kinds of skills are lacking, etc. This can be done by surveying or asking individual members. The secretariat can also build up a database of the skills available and the skills required. The gap can be identified, need and requirement can be assessed and trainings and capacity building can be taken up.

From the human development point of view the network should know what invitation can be taken up so as to enhance the capacity of the secretariat as well as the member organisations. A network should be very cautious about the demotivating factors and take corrective measures and improve the skills of the individual members or staff.

4. Management of job description and time

Job Description

Job description deals with all that an employee has to do when s/he is recruited in an organization. Job description is often linked with *role description* because individuals having the same post have different skills, knowledge and motivation.

Networks cannot have job description for their members. Job description can only be made for the secretariat staff. In the context of networks roles can be assigned to member organisations and staff in the secretariat.

A network can categorize its functions like:

Doing: The network members or the staff are doing the work themselves.

Managing: The members of the governing board are not doing the functions themselves but are managing, supervising, controlling and guiding someone else.

Manualising : The network is documenting some case studies, functions, campaign processes and experiences for future use.

Reporting: Writing reports, reporting to the donors etc.

Staff development: Staff related activities, improvement of staff etc.

Basically for networks it is more of role clarity than job description. For secretariat staff however networks can have job descriptions.

A job description consists of four parts:

Specifications: The general information about whom the person will be reporting to, what grade he is in

Functions: What are the functions, roles and responsibilities of the person

Role description: The information about the person’s education, critical skills s/he has and also speaks in, which areas the organization will seek support from the person or provide support.

Indicators: The indicators that would determine the performance of the person.

Time Management

The need for time management cannot be overstressed. Mismanagement of time leads to overshooting of schedules, monetary loss, pushes people into crisis situations and ultimately ends up in feeling harassed and appear to be incompetent to others. The thumb rule for time management is time budgeting and managing time wasters. It is a continuous process of budgeting time, controlling unproductive activities and wastes.

Time management is thus a basic component of Human Resource Management. Those networks that manage time effectively are treated as synergistic networks whereas those who are not utilizing time in a productive manner become ineffective and tend to loose the efficiency. Time management depends upon the type of work we perform and the urgency and importance of the work that is to be done. This can be understood by the following matrix.

There are certain activities, which are not very important but are very urgent. These may be certain phone calls, certain mails to be sent etc.

There are also some works, which are neither urgent nor important such as day-to-day works, filing, some mails and some phone calls.

TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX		
	Urgent	Not so Urgent
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis • Pressing problems • Meetings • Deadlines • Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production capability of employees • Human Resource Management • Maintenance of office staff etc. • Retention of staff • Recreation • Relationship building
Not so important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Calls • Some mails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some busy work • Some calls • Some publications

The above mentioned urgent and important works are hypothetical. Each network will have their own priorities of urgent and important works depending upon the activities they are into.

In the context of a network if we see the whole range of activities and time allotted to each of those activities we become cautious. It is generally said that most of the time in the voluntary sector is spent in conducting meetings. In the preparatory phase of a project a lot of time is devoted to meetings, which are not useful.

In regards to managing time we can prioritize activities. From among the list of activities one has to be able to segregate various activities and address them according to priority. For a staff, time management has direct linkage with his / her job description. Her/ His job description should clearly speak about what all job s/he has to manage within the stipulated time so that s/he can plan out accordingly.

For people who are in a leadership position the most urgent should occupy some time, the not so urgent but very important activities should occupy the maximum time and least urgent should occupy the least amount of time. These are strategic functions like environmental scan, policy analysis and others and 60% of a leaders' time should go into this.

But it is seen that because operational structures are weak and the leaders are not properly making operational strategies these later on lead to crisis situations. If the leaders cannot anticipate the problems then it becomes a crisis later. So as a result many organizational leaders are seen to spend more time in the urgent and doing functions. So whatever the staff is supposed to do is done by the leaders and the staff has a jolly good time.

So if strategic functions get neglected the strategic leader becomes an operational doer of the already delegated work and the doing person gets away without doing anything. Ultimately the leader is stressed with so much work that s/he needs to do personal stress management. A leader should never fall into the trap of performing any of the doing functions. The leader who is managing time in the second window should also allocate some free time while planning so that s/he can attend to some urgent and immediate work if it comes up. These dynamics need to be very well understood.

In a network when we talk about performance we talk of performance of individuals or member organisations and / or the secretariat. When performance review is taken up three steps are involved. They are setting performance standards, support or coaching and the third is review. At the beginning of the year we decide on what a person is supposed to do and they jointly agree taking into account their skills and competency. At the end of the year we do the review. There should be some scope to include or delete some other activities. The other step is to provide support to the person intermittently. If at the very beginning we are clear about the list of activities we have to perform and get support at regular intervals at the end of the year review of our performance will not come as a threat.

5. Human Resource Retention

In an organizational context all human beings are Human Resources. So when a person leaves the organization and remains in the same sector by joining another organization it is a loss for the former organization but not for the sector. But if the person leaves the sector and joins some other sector all together, then it is a loss for the organization as well as the sector.

In case of a corporate and the government sector there are definite structures and people know where they will be after a few years. But in the voluntary sector the structure is very fluid and the existence is also not guaranteed forever. So to retain staff is very difficult. But this area is manageable.

As a leader, manager or supervisor we never tend to know an individual as an individual and this generates frustrations. In the sector we have never attempted to do something to retain persons who are leaving because we see the individual as staff members but never see the individuals as human beings.

When a staff leaves an organization there is a system. When a person is asked about what is positive or negative about the organization where s/he has been working for several years s/he is not in a position to say, but when s/he leaves, s/he is free to tell. It is like a dying statement. This helps us to know the exact reasons for the person's

dissatisfaction. So a network should have such a system to record the view of the leaving member organization and also staff of the secretariat.

Motivation is required to retain staff. Absence of something generally demotivates but presence of something does not necessarily motivate. E.g. absence of monetary factor will demotivate but presence of monetary factor does not guarantee motivation in somebody. The motivating and demotivating factors need to be identified. The factors for retention are not always economical, they are mostly motivational. A line of appreciation, or a pat or a job enlargement, works more than enhancement of salary or perks. In management theory when we give additional responsibility to a person it is job enlargement in a horizontal line while job enrichment is giving job on the vertical line like giving decision making powers etc.

In management when we talk of span of control, the management says that the maximum number of persons that can be controlled by a single individual is six. So when we find a person managing ten persons actually he is managing nothing. Whereas a person who manages five persons knows each and every aspect of those human beings.

There are no readymade solutions as to how we can retain people but the best option is to create an environment and a system by which we can retain people, hire their expertise at the time of need and also know the motivational and non-motivational factors for their retention. All the experiences that a person gathers needs to be manualised so that even if s/he leaves, her / his well-documented work will support the system for some days and won't be a loss for the organization.

If we synthesize all the elements discussed above we find that a network's first work is doing job analysis which means analyzing and identifying job content of a current job or new job and then preparing organizational job designing for each job. The job design is not a formally written document and a person does not necessarily follow the job design. So from the job design role description is made according to the competency of the person who will be carrying it out.

Role description consists of the doing functions, managing functions, manualising functions, reporting functions and staff development functions. By doing manualising the organization never feels threatened even if the concerned person leaves the organization and it is also a developing process. It becomes a dissemination manual for self-learning. Here it is essential to be responsible for staff development and also for self-development.

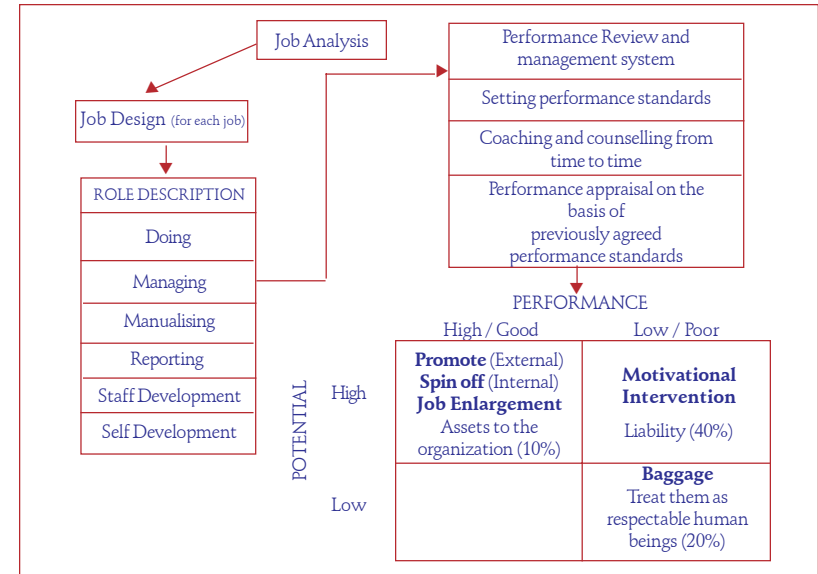
Once there is a role description the organization should simultaneously have performance review and management systems. This should consist of - setting performance standards, coaching and counseling from time to time and performance appraisal on the basis of previously agreed performance standards.

In an organization there are people who have high performance capability and high potential. These people get frustrated soon by doing the same things over and over again. The organization becomes responsible for their growth. If the growth is internal they get promoted and if it is external they are a spin off. It is not throwing the person out but as the organization cannot accommodate them they are provided with a better avenue. For these people the organization might also think in terms of Job enlargement.

But for the second category of people with high performance and low potential, the organization should retain them through job rotation or strategic job enrichment so that they acquire various skills and become an integral part of the organization. It is dangerous to promote them to managerial position because they are good in performing their job rather than in a managerial job.

People in the last category with low performance but high potential must be having some kind of motivational problems. They leave and are a liability to the organization as they will never speak highly about the organization once they are out of it.

The last category is people with low performance but high potential and they are termed as “baggage” and they in no way help the organization. They may create contra culture within the organization and so the organization has to find a way out as to what will be best for her / him as well as for the organization and treat them accordingly. Persistent coun-



seling and support is required from them. They can be grouped together for a challenging assignment with a common purpose.

People with high performance and high potential and low performance and high potential tend to leave the organization. But people with low potential and high performance tend to stay back biting the dust because they have no opportunity outside.

Any task must have three components to be highly motivational.

a) *Significance*: to do something, which is contributing to the well being of others

b) *Integration*: to do something, which is importantly linked with other people's jobs and

c) *Variety*: a reasonable kind of variety is there

An organization, which has all these, can be termed as a holographic organization where each person has a core skill and at least they can perform another function in the absence of any other. Thus an organization becomes holographic instead of becoming a hierarchical organization.

From the above graph we can see that generally speaking an organization has 10% of its staff in the first category (high performance capability and high potential), 30% in the second (high performance and low potential), 40% in the third category (low performance and high potential) and 20% in the last category (low performance and low potential). If an organization tends to talk more about the first category then the rest 70% feels neglected. (Only 70% is considered because the rest 10% category are not bothered about whether they are being cared for or not). The human resource management strategy should be such that the 70% gets more attention because the 10% category are self motivated and do not need any kind of attention. From the human resource development point of view more investment is done for the 10% category, which should be diverted for the grooming and motivation of the 70% category.

E.g. whenever there is any kind of training, the organization tends to send only the first category people whereas the second and third category are the ones who would actually need the training. By making such strategic managerial investment the third and second category of people would be able to develop themselves and thus the organizational growth would also take place.

D. Structural and Systems Management

Organizational structure evolves through a systematic process or as a result of changes in the collective paradigm and or to changes in technology, power, strategy, environment and size.

An organizational structure provides a framework within which the following things take place:

- ❑ Jobs are divided up among people (called Differentiation)
- ❑ Guidelines are specified in rules, regulations, policies and procedures (Formalization)
- ❑ Authority relationships are delineated (Centralized)
- ❑ The entire organization is linked together by various coordinating mechanism (Integration)

Structure consists of work units, teams and individuals etc., which are interrelated to each other as a body for the attainment of the mission. E.g. the structure of a building consists of bricks, cement, tiles, beams etc. each of which has its own purpose. The architect plans out how it should look and the contractor or engineer puts the components in the right place. Thus the architect plans but the implementation is carried out by engineers.

Structure is determined by the components it consists of (divisions, departments, work-units, teams etc.) and the relationship that exists between these components. Due to the nature of existing relations between the components one can distinguish a formal and an informal structure.

While formulating the structure of a network proper placement of its components has to be assured. In a network the bricks are the developmental actors and the cement is the common purpose, values and the beliefs.

A network will have different capacities of people joining. Their appropriate placement is necessary so that they are very effective. If the work role of different developmental actors are not appropriately placed it will not be effective and become a club or activity or task-oriented. Structure should be built in such a way so that it relates to the environment. The member organizations are the main players in formulating the structure based on their common purpose, values and beliefs.

In a network the structure does not come top to down or down to top, it happens in an organization only. In a network the structure emerges on the basis of the main objectives and strategies.

Once the structure is formed and the working roles are placed appropriately and are interrelated it has to be made functional. This is where the system formulation comes into the picture.

System is a cluster of interrelated processes to make the structure functional aimed at achieving the vision and mission.

Process is a series of consecutive and interrelated activities in a network. Process proceeds forward, comes one after another (consecu-

tive) and are inter-related. The processes in a network are formulated based on the operational principles – the operational principles that someone likes to see. The operational principles can be collective decision making, sharing of resources, being transparent and being accountable etc.

A network may have the following processes:

1. Administration and coordinating process
2. Reporting process : who reports to whom, how and what
3. Resources mobilization and budgeting process
4. Programme Planning Process
5. Capacity building process
6. Monitoring and assessment process

If all the processes work right and work within the system set in then the structure will be functional. If in between any one of the processes is not working then the system will collapse. All these processes and many others grouped together form a system. None of these processes are isolated.

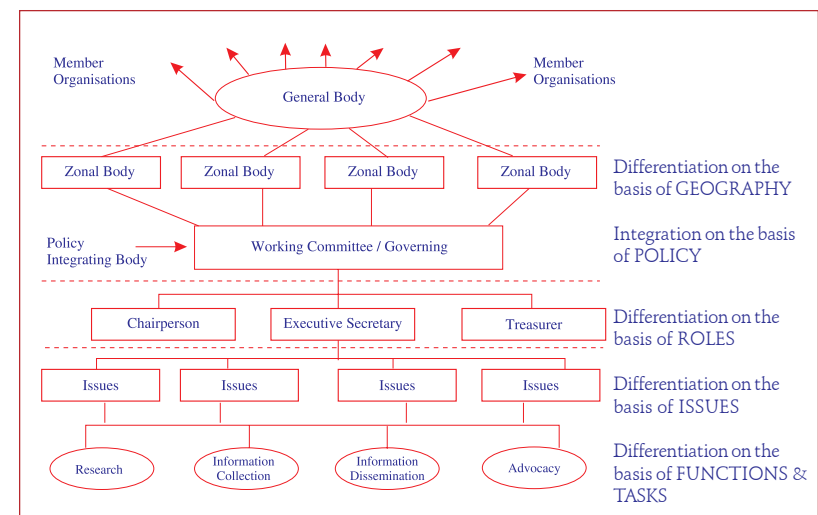
In the collective decision making process we would need some kind of reports (reporting process). The report will be collected from programmes (programme planning process). The programme will be reported through the administrative process where the financial process is also involved. Here the personnel involved in the process also comes in and thus personnel management process. The personnel will look into the planning process so as to see how was the planning done.

So from the planning process it goes to personnel management process – to financial and administrative process – to programme process – to reporting process and ultimately based on all these processes collective decisions are taken. Even though in a structure different people are placed at different places they will not be able to function without the processes. None will know to whom they report, to whom to give money etc. We have also seen in different organisations and networks where systems, procedures and proper structures are there that these organisations / networks work pertinently and even after the demise of the leader / founder, they continue their trudge onwards.

In a set structure or system it is very difficult to respond to a crisis

because the network has to go through a set process. The structure of the network then becomes important and we have to see how to take care of these situations. Ideally structures and systems should be such that they automatically gear into action during a crisis situation. This is where the principle of subsidiarity comes in. The principle of subsidiarity says that “what can be done / decided at the lower level should not be done at a higher level”.

E.g. if a network gets any news of its members being attacked, the secretariat or the concerned person should not wait for the decisions or the permission to be taken from the governing body or working committee. If the person starts following the system at the time of crisis then the importance and impact of the action taken by the network later does not have any impact. There should be proper clarity



about the role the concerned body has to play and s/he should take actions immediately. The structure or the system should be always encouraging the functioning of a network but not for restricting or limiting its horizon.

A structure is a reasonable stable arrangement to achieve the purpose. The network has to see that whether the structure is optimally providing them the result they want to achieve. Structure cannot be fixed or prescribed, it differs with strategies, objectives and from place to place.

In the first hypothetical network structure there is a general body with all kinds of member organisations. And these members have zonal consultative bodies where they identify regional and zonal issues some of which are of national importance on which they would like to work.

Here the structure is differentiated on the basis of geography. This is to simplify the structure and make the process easier because getting consensus of all the members is rather difficult. From here the issues are identified and delegated to the working committee / board to further develop and identify priority issues in consistence with the network's values and principles. For coordination and integrating function just like the human brain, the working committee becomes the integrating body doing policy integration.

Through election, nomination or some other methods a chairperson, a treasurer and an executive secretary is chosen. Here the basis of differentiation is the role. The role of the chairperson is to lead, the role of the treasurer is to generate, mobilize and manage resources and the role of the secretary is to implement.

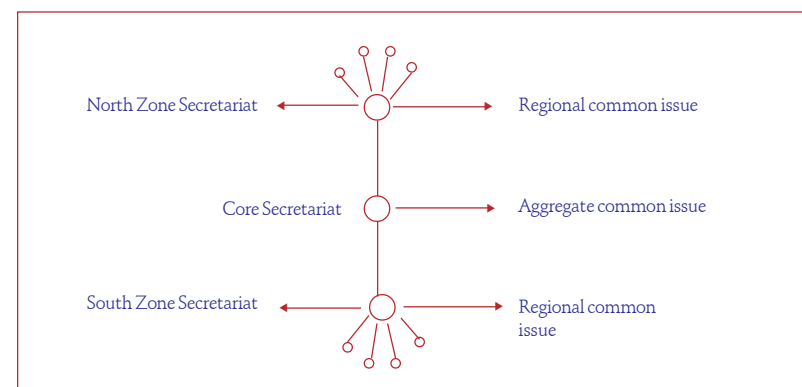
When a network decides to work on various issues it gets differentiated again on the basis of issues. In the hypothetical network the issue has two functions – research and advocacy. One unit will do fundamental research and collect information on various issues or fields and the other unit will take the information to create alternative arguments to influence the outside constituencies or the policy making body. So here also differentiation is taking place on the basis of functions.

When a network starts growing, for each issue the network needs to have one administrative unit. The more issues a network takes up the more issue wise decentralization is necessary. Geographical decentralization is also required when the network had growing members. The structure is thus a result of the scope of the work a network takes up and the scope of the area in which the network wants to intervene. Structure should be based on programmes and activities rather than the structure determining the programmes and activities.

In the second hypothetical network the structure which is decentralized, has two secretariats one at the north and the other at the south each having a separate set of members. Amongst them there is 1st order

of common issues i.e. there is an issue specific to this zone.

But there are some issues which are national in nature. This becomes aggregate nodal common issue to both the zones.



So in the first level the basis of differentiation is geographic and corresponding regional issue at that level. Whereas at the national level commonality of issue will be the basis of integration.

So while making a structure a network has to really see on what basis they are going to differentiate and at what stage. Alongwith the basis of differentiation the network should have some kind of coordinating committee or some mechanism for integration.

E. Culture and Climate Management

Although each best practice organization or network identifies and articulates its mission differently, a clearly defined set of aspired behaviors and goals form a common framework for all their operations, strategies and activities.

Regardless of the format, these organizations or networks outline their mission / goal, the strategy or behaviors necessary to attain that goal, and values that set the ground rules for collective actions. Mission statement, code of ethics must be well integrated with strategic objectives in creating a positive organizational and network culture.

Culture can be termed as “the way of life for an entire society.” As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals,

norms of behaviour and systems of belief. A common way of understanding culture within a network is to see it as consisting of the following elements: namely *values* and *norms*.

Values are our subjective reactions to the world around us. They guide and mold our options and behavior. In the context of a network a value (e.g. Truth, Freedom, Greed) is part of the core value system from which one operates or reacts. Values can be grouped into six categories:

- ❑ Ethics (good - bad, virtue - vice, moral - immoral - amoral, right - wrong, permissible - impermissible)
- ❑ Aesthetics (beautiful, ugly, unbalanced, pleasing)
- ❑ Doctrinal (political, ideological, religious or social beliefs and values)
- ❑ Innate (inborn values such as reproduction and survival, a controversial category)
- ❑ Non-use/passive - includes the value based on something never used or seen, or something left for the next generation.
- ❑ Potential/option - the value of something that's known to be only potentially valuable, such as a plant that might be found to have medicinal value in the future.

A norm can be a standard that a society expects or accepts, thought or conduct approved by a society. Traditional norms, existing in networks including reciprocation in gift-giving and the obligation of hospitality to strangers.

It is this culture that gives all networks some form of meaning, and to the social relationships and practices in which such norms and values become embedded, thus giving credence to the work carried out by the network itself.

Climate on the other hand, can be defined as an enduring pattern of working / way of doing things to solve problems, to achieve goal in a given context; Structuring recreational time through arts, music etc;

Habitual ways of perceiving / interpreting reality; Totality of beliefs and assumptions; behind what either an individual, an organization or

a collective does. Climate emerges out of action learning.

A check list can be made to find out what kind of actions in a network makes someone feel as if he is a part of the network, what kinds of actions will lead to actual decision making (e.g. facilitating, soliciting information setting criteria, have discussion directed towards the result that we have in mind etc.) what kind of actions does the network take in case of conflicts etc., what kind of actions led to the intended result of the network. Through the list of actions that will emerge from the exercise the network will be able to accomplish the task by maintaining fraternity, feeling of solidarity.

Critical factors involved in creating a supportive productive working environment can be as follows:

- ❑ Mission statement and code of ethics must be very well integrated
- ❑ Two way communication with staff and members
- ❑ Employees and members feel valued and respected by the network
- ❑ Open, conducive to innovation and risk taking by staff and members
- ❑ Executive and senior staff accessible to employees
- ❑ Observed behavioral regularities when people interact such as the language used
- ❑ The norms that evolve in working groups, governing board, secretariat, etc.
- ❑ The dominant values espoused by the network
- ❑ The philosophy that guides the network's policy toward employees and / or members
- ❑ The feeling or climate that is conveyed in the network by the physical layout and the way in which members of the network interact with other members of the outer world

Everything is created at least twice. First creation takes place in the mind and the second takes place externally. When we talk about structure as an enduring reasonable arrangement, this reasonable arrangement is also in the mind. The foundation is the invisible part of the organization i.e. values, beliefs, philosophy etc. unless it is

articulated. The second part is the Super ordinate structure which includes organizational strategy, goal etc. Then comes the organizational infrastructure that includes systems, procedures etc. That becomes a very important aspect of organizational structure synthesis.

In a network since the organizations will be dispersed far and wide, the network must have very effective synergising and integrative processes. The first process would be collective planning the aim being consensus through principle centered planning.

The second aspect is congruence review. Here the network would see as to what extent the activities are consistent with the stated strategy, the strategy in congruence with the mission and the mission in congruence to the vision. Congruence review has to be done from time-to-time to avoid the deviation from the strategy and the network can maintain its synergy.

The third important aspect is trust retreat. Here the network should not be interested in knowing what all the members have done but to see to what extent the network has been reciprocal and supportive of each other and that there is no feeling of alienation. Such retreat is necessary in order to avoid forced or voluntary alienation.

The fourth aspect is just in time response. In case of a network the working environment is chaotic. Here the network needs to be proactive rather than reactive and here the issue is solidarity. Another component is that the main function of a network is also to collect, analyze and disseminate information. This has to be done in time because old information has no value. In times of crisis networks should respond immediately otherwise the issue gets diluted and the members feel alienated.

No.	Process	Issue	How
1	Collective Planning	Consensus	Principle centered planning
2	Congruence review	Values	Invoke the stated values / principles during planning
3	Trust Retreat	Reciprocal and alienation ownership	Sensitivity lab, self exploration exercise
4	Just in time response	Solidarity	Faster information process

How does a network bring consensus so that the network gets into collective planning?

There are two kind of planning – principle centered planning and position based planning. These determine the climate of the network. People tend to reach into consensus when they take a position. But if the principles are very clear in a network then consensus can be readily achieved. So if there is principle centered planning rather than position based planning it is easy to bring a consensus. Consensus can also be brought through values based planning. Values become the polestar of the network.

In congruence review the network should invoke the stated values and principles. The review should not be in terms of quantity but what the network could have done qualitatively.

For trust retreat the network can organize sensitivity lab / self-exploration exercise. At this level people would like to share their emotions.

Just in time response would need faster information processing and for this the network would require electronic recorder, information technology etc. If a network has all of these ICT devices it can build up a climate of synergy in a network.

In the context of a network the elements of climate will be work culture, working environment, relationship and discipline etc.

Following are the factors which are necessary for effective realization of the network climate.

- ❑ Often it is found that few members somehow are more powerful than the collective. So it has to be seen to what extent the network is individualistic or collective.
- ❑ To what extent the network is collective or decentralized.
- ❑ To what extent in the network there is intolerance or tolerance for error, dissent and disagreement.
- ❑ To what extent does the network view conflict to be something dealt with under the carpet or as a source of creative solution. If a network is functioning without any conflict for five years it can be presumed that something has to be wrong with the network.

- ❑ Whether there is a lack of self-disclosure about non-performance or open, candid, self – disclosing.
- ❑ To what extent members are loyal to their own organization or to their network.
- ❑ To what extent the network has affronting or confronting attitudes
- ❑ To what extent the network is accountable or non-accountable
- ❑ To what extent the network maintains uniformity or diversity
- ❑ To what extent the approach is by avoiding of risk or approach with well calculated risk
- ❑ To what extent the network is conservative or experimental / exploitative / interested in breaking new ground
- ❑ To what extent the network is untimely or meeting all the deadlines and important commitments timely
- ❑ To what extent the network is pursuing self interest of few members or collective interest
- ❑ To what extent the network is reactive or pro-active. Some networks start gearing up only when the crisis arrives whereas some are prepared beforehand after integrating the data in the environment and analyzing what kind of problems may arise.

		TASK AND GOAL ORIENTED	
		High	Low
Maintenance solidarity orientation	High	SYNERGISTIC	CULTURE OF COUNTRY CLUB
	Low	TASK OBSESSIVE	CULTURE OF DISINTEGRATION

A network with high goal and high maintenance orientation will be definitely a synergistic network.

A network with high goal orientation but low maintenance becomes task obsessive. Being task obsessive at the time of crisis is good. But we should find some time for relaxation or retreat also. In these networks there is no opportunity created for the member organizations to share their feelings but only review of their tasks which looks as if one is being treated as a piece of furniture.

The network which has low goal orientation but high solidarity orientation has the culture of a country club and any network with low goal orientation and low solidarity orientation will have a culture of disintegration. So a network has to see in which of these four cultures they fit in and then take appropriate steps to improve its culture.

F. Leadership Management

There is a continual search for persons who have the necessary ability which enables them to lead effectively. According to George R. Terry, 'Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives.' Harold Koontz and Cyril O' Daniel state that 'Leadership is influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal'.

When we talk of leadership in a network the first thing that comes to our mind is collective leadership. Collective leadership can only be achieved when an individual moves taking all persons into consideration. But at the same time the role of an individual cannot be ignored.

McClelland claims that the leadership style of the leader will depend on his / her own motive. The three motives relevant to network leaders can be power : concern for influencing others ; affiliation : concern for maintaining harmonious relations; and achievement : concern for excellence. People with different motives tend to develop different leadership styles e.g.

- ❑ Power motivated leaders tend to be forcible or authoritarian.
- ❑ Affiliation motivated leaders tend to be affiliated or democrats.
- ❑ Achievement motivated leaders tend to be pace setters or coaches.

Power comes from the skill that a leader can deliver, only by saying that a leader has power is not sufficient. The leader has to prove his / her skills that they have power. In a network the leader must have an attitude so that many actors can come in to bring about a change.

The leader must also know how to take a back seat so that others can come up. In political parties the attitude of leaders is to capture power, whereas in a network the leader is to bring about a social change so that the power equation is reversed. The leadership becomes effective when there is delegation of power and responsibility.

In the context of leadership it is said that leadership emerges and is not delegated. Whereas another thought is that leadership is groomed. In the context of network delegating power to a leader does not often work out well. It is observed that people with certain attributes, skills and personality emerge as a leader and take responsibility of the network. He / she also delegates power to others.

In a network there should be a proper environment for the second line of leadership to emerge out. The executive secretary or the coordinator in a network are appointed posts and they are actually managers and not the leaders. Leaders are those who provide guidance and lead and leadership emerges from the members through a process.

All over the world we have found many management or training institutions which are producing managers but there is no institute that produces leaders because leaders emerge automatically.

The recent management theories differentiates between managers and leaders. They say that :

1. Managers lead from the left and leaders lead from the right. Here right and left is referred to in terms of the human brain. Generally all the analyzing, logic, reasoning, thinking etc. is done by the left hemisphere of the brain. Whereas leaders function through their right brain which deals with goodness, emotions, integrity, vision, intuitions etc.
2. A Leader does the right thing and a manager does things right. A leader generally never attempts to do something wrong but only does the right thing / things which are genuine and accurate.

Whereas even if a manager is put in a wrong situation he / she will manage to do things right. They will attempt to do both the good and bad things to make things right.

3. All managers are leaders but all leaders are not necessarily managers. All managers will always have some components of leadership but in case of leaders only a few will have managerial skills. They have different kinds of attributes and skills of mobilizing people but when put into any improper situation all cannot manage to come out from the situation.

No person is a 100% leader or 100% manager. Each person has a combination of both. If a person has more of leadership qualities s/he is a leader and if the person has more managing capacities s/he is a manager. It is important to put the focus in the right direction according to the context.

Management theory also says that only four kinds of attributes are required for a leader to become effective. They are:

Vision: All leaders need to have a dream and a dream has many components. It is to see how a leader has some kind of interconnectedness in their thinking level and how they are connecting the individual entities to the dream properly.

Setting an example before others: What a leader says or believes has to be exhibited in action so that they set an example before others e.g. if a leader asks everyone to gather at 10.00 a.m. every morning then she / he should be there before the set time.

Managing people and their emotions: If human resources are managed well it is said that everything is managed. So leadership becomes effective when human beings are managed well.

Shifting between styles: The leadership process can be between two points on a continuum, one point being autocratic while the other being democratic, all having relevance to a specific context. A leader becoming democratic all through cannot function effectively in all situations. Throughout the day a leader as an individual needs to shift between his / her style of functioning. Generally the leader tends to function in a particular style every time but as a practice one needs to play all kinds of roles depending upon the situation. This is also called as situational leadership.

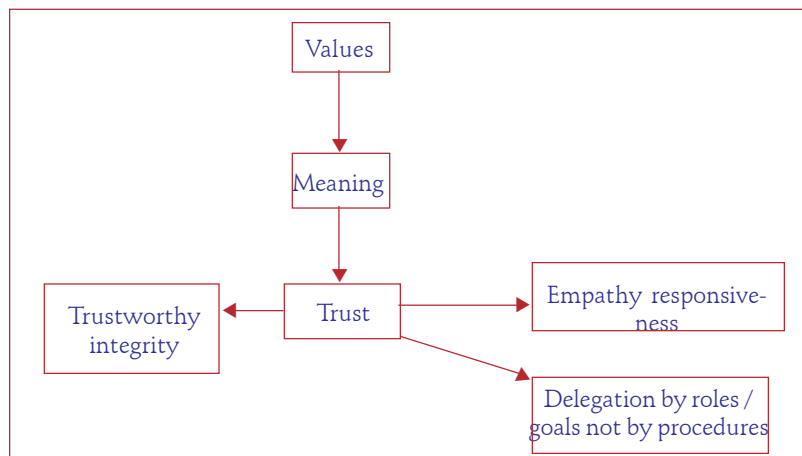
Although in a network we talk about collective leadership it is not that all the 200 or 500 members are leaders but it is generally some 10 – 12 people out of the 200 – 500 members that provide leadership. These 10 - 12 may be the part of the governing body.

In principle-centered leadership, value is the basic component of a leader. The value gets a meaning when s/he starts clarifying the values s/he upholds. Then comes trust. One important element of trust is empathy / responsiveness. Empathy in management terms is a proper understanding of your partner(s) needs and responding accordingly.

The next important element is delegation by role / goal and not by procedures. Leadership or delegation by role means that the leader only delegates by creating appropriate conditions.

In a learning curve a network needs solicited guidance or interactive guidance instead of constant guidance. If the leader persists giving constant guidance then the trust established is spoilt. So here role delegation is preferred rather than delegation through procedures. Another component of trust is being trustworthy. Unless a leader is trustworthy nobody will trust him / her. To be trustworthy, integrity is necessary i.e. whatever you value you show it through your actions or whatever values a leader has s/he leads by example.

So if a leader has all of the above – value, meaning , trust, responsiveness, delegation of roles and integrity, s/he will become an **ideal leader**.



Two very interesting components emerge from the above. One is **commitment** and the other is **competence**. In a network if a member organization has high commitment and high competence one should understand that they have the capacity of becoming **potential leaders**.

When a member organization has high commitment but low competence then their capacity has to be built. Here the network leader has to take proper interventions for the capacity building of the networks' members.

When the network member has low commitment but high competence the leaders should do a review and find the reasons and then try to integrate. Otherwise the network might loose these members.

		COMMITTMENT	
		High	Low
COMPETENCE	High	POTENTIAL LEADERS DELEGATE	FIND THE REASONS AND INTEGRATE
	Low	CAPACITY BUILDING OF MEMBER ORGANISATION	LONGER CONSULTATION AND PATIENCE

The last category of members will be one with low commitment and low competence and thus they require longer consultation of the leaders and more patience.

According to Henry Mintzberg there are 10 skills that a leader should possess. They are as follows:

- 1. Peer skills:** The ability to establish and maintain a network of contacts with equals. In a network the leader has to relate to,

collaborate with and also understand member organisations and establish proper linkages with them.

2. **Managerial skills:** The ability to appraise, develop and deal with member organisations also to have an awareness of the kind of complications that are created by power, authority and dependence.
3. **Conflict resolutions skills:** The ability to mediate and resolve conflict between member organisations, ideologies, between individuals in the secretariat etc.
4. **Information Analyzing skills:** The ability to collect information, to build a system of information flow, to extract and analyze the relevant information and then to disseminate the same effectively.
5. **Skills in unstructured decision-making:** The ability to find problems and solutions when alternatives, information and objectives are ambiguous and unclear. Often in adverse situations the network leaders have to give solutions to the problems. This skill is very important for a leader.
6. **Resource allocation skills :** The ability to decide on how to allocate and distribute the resources that a network has amongst itself and how to optimally utilize resources. Often misallocation of resources both human and financial with a network results in total wastage.
7. **Entrepreneurial skills:** The ability to anticipate adverse conditions, take sensible risks and implement innovations. The skill of foreseeing the environmental change and acting accordingly is an essential skill of a leader to make the network proactive.
8. **Skills of introspection:** The ability to understand the position of a leader and his / her impact on the network and member organizations. The leader has to have the skills of self-analyzing and self-confronting or reflecting upon his / her actions.
9. **Inter-personal skills:** The skill to perceive and understand the behaviour and motivation of others and to interact with them meaningfully in the interest of tasks and relationships.

10. Value drive action: The ability to perform, promote, monitor and function according to the stated value of the network.

The leader should also possess the skill to facilitate, instruct, advise, record and evaluate any event or activity.

Judging leadership

There should be some indicators on how to judge whether the leadership is effective or not.

- ❑ One important aspect is that whether the leader can get along with all the other member organisations and fulfill the tasks. He / she should neither be too task oriented nor fool around. Although chances exists for leaders to fool around and still get along with the members.
- ❑ Whether the leader is trustworthy or not and whether member organisations have trust and confidence of / in the leader. Trust should be from both the sides.
- ❑ Leadership can also be judged from the consequences of their decision-making.
- ❑ Whether the leader effectively delegates power, roles and responsibilities. This can be best judged when the leader is out and still the network is functioning effectively. This becomes a good example of delegation of power and responsibilities.
- ❑ The leader can also be judged by the consistency in his/ her saying and doing.

G. Governance Management

The word 'Governance' implies the totality of functions that are required to be carried out in relation to the internal functioning and external relations of organisations. It is not the same as management and focuses on issues of policy and identity, rather than the issues of day-to-day implementation of programmes.

Thus governance implies addressing the issue of vision, mission and strategy; it focuses on future directions and long term strategic considerations; it addresses the issues of policy in relation to internal

programming, staffing and resources; it defines norms and values that are the basis of institutional functioning; it includes obligations entailed in fulfilling statutory requirements applicable to the organization and focuses on defining the external positions that are consistent with the overall thrust of the organization.

Most importantly, the governance of an organization is concerned with its effective functioning and performance in society.

‘Governing Body’ is a body which sees whether the network is moving towards the stated direction. It has to take the network along the stated objectives. Governing Body directs the personnel, the management, sets up the structure and system in a network. The governing body gives a certain kind of thrust or push towards the stated direction.

Although in the context of a network it is always taken for granted that the general body is the supreme body to decide everything, in reality it is not so. The network in totality has to be governed by a small set or group of people. The general body can only give certain directions.

Governance takes place at all levels and is shared by every member in a network. The general body gives a general direction or takes a policy decision. So this body has a share in the role of the governance. Now all the general body members would not sit together and work on policy formulations or alternatives. So they delegate this role to the executive committee.

The executive committee while executing the policy decision starts distributing the roles according to the skills and capacities of the personnel and also divides the work between the member organisations. So it delegates both the governance role and the managerial role to the concerned member relevant to the work. This percolation of governance role takes place in concurrence to the general body. There will be some governance role or system of the executive body, certain role for the management and some for the secretariat. If the network is decentralized the governance functions also gets decentralized to a certain extent with different administrative body.

The governance functions in the context of a network can be listed as follows:

- ❑ Policy determination
 - ❑ Maintenance of transparency, accountability and norms for good governance
 - ❑ Ensuing fulfillment of all constitutional as well as legal requirements
 - ❑ Reviewing and monitoring whether the function and activities of the network is proceeding towards the right direction and in the right time e.g. election and meetings are being held on time
 - ❑ Appointing personnel in the secretariat and their development
 - ❑ Human resource management including disciplinary action against guilty
 - ❑ Resource mobilization, management and budgeting
 - ❑ Liasoning with outside bodies
 - ❑ Selection of members of the network
 - ❑ Planning for functions / programmes for the coming years
- The indicators for keeping track of whether the governance functions are carried out well can be listed as under:
- ❑ When both ways and within the system information flow is ensured
 - ❑ When the communication system is such that information percolates down and all the members know about the policy decisions
 - ❑ When the democratic functioning and collective decision making process is ensured. Deviance from this will get reflected when in a network majority goes against the decision. This indicates that the decision was not taken collectively.
 - ❑ When there is articulation of commitment of the members to values, vision, mission through their action.
 - ❑ When the meetings and elections takes place at the scheduled time and with full quorum

- When there is a review of the consequences of the decision made.

It is often seen that within the functions that a governing body has to perform there are some functions, which get least attention. E.g. the personnel of the secretariat get least attention. The governance is more concerned about how the network functions outside but is not bothered about how it functions inside. Whether leadership in the secretariat is value driven or not, taking collective decisions or not, democratic or authoritarian in his / her style of functioning, gender sensitive etc.

The governance gives least attention also to the interrelationship between the network members, which is one crucial element of the network.

Although resource mobilization is the prime area of concern of the governing body, they do not take much interest in resource mobilization, resource management and budgeting. During the implementation of programmes also the governing body generally does not take any responsibility and finally it come down heavily upon the secretariat. In such a situation the secretariat starts behaving like a super organization and treats member organisations as subordinates. The Executive Secretary or the CEO also starts behaving like a commander of the network.

Thus good management cannot be achieved unless the privileges, obligations and responsibilities are established and agreed upon.



C H A P T E R

4

Roles and Responsibilities of Networks: Influencing Role

Roles and Responsibilities of Networks: Influencing Role

Networks bring together people, organizations and resources and play an important role in advocacy. Networks allow different groups to work together toward a shared goal by coordinating strategies and pooling resources.

A network is not necessary for effective advocacy; any committed organization or individual can bring the skills and experience necessary to build support for an issue / group of issues. However, a network can achieve results that would be difficult for any single member to accomplish alone. The process of building the network also strengthens members' skills in mobilizing support for an issue, a useful skill when advocating with opinion leaders, policy makers, and the public.

Working together in a network can improve the quality and the quantity of work and spread responsibilities by allowing individuals and groups to contribute ideas, expertise, and resources. When advocacy efforts are successful, all members benefit.

The influencing role of a network

All individuals have aspirations: things they want to achieve, to learn, to see and to do. When aspirations are focused on an issue beyond an individual's control the person often feels powerless to influence *the system or decision-takers*. In these circumstances, people frequently display an awareness of issues, but their behaviour is characterized by inaction. How can this be overcome? By forming a collective identity for taking action, or a *network*, people can better address these aspirations.

Networks are one form of collective identity. They are a mechanism through which communications happens or can be enhanced.

The stakeholders that networks influence include the following:

1. Members
2. Policy Makers
 - a. Legislators
 - b. Bureaucracy
 - c. Judiciary
 - d. Media
3. System of governance
 - I. National
 - i. Parliament, Provincial Assemblies, District Bodies etc.
 - ii. National & State Commissions formed by the government
 - iii. Quasi Judicial bodies, Law commission, Law Universities etc.
 - iv. Local self governance
 - II. International
 - i. UN Agencies such as FAO / ILO / UNCTAD / UNICEF / UNIFEM
 - ii. World Trade Organization (WTO)
 - iii. World Bank (WB)
 - iv. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 - v. Others
4. Mindset of people at large
5. Those who can influence policy makers and policy bodies

1. Members

Members in a network are its most important asset. They develop new ways to work together, expand its influence and are also critical for the future viability of the Network.

Their “resource-integration” promotes linking together resources to create expanded value and includes more actively sharing what is working between locals across the state. Various ideas and activities conducted by them together become a powerhouse and ensure a strong

voice at the state capitals and in local jurisdictions while delivering even more membership value.

Networks should keep informing their members and others about various developments within and outside the networks, and members too have to send regular information to the network for wider dissemination. Timely dissemination of information among the members across the region is very important.

Networks need to work as a data bank with broader information about the various sectoral issues depending on their objectives in that region. Access to the right kind of information has to be developed. Research, analytical and writing skills have to be acquired for proper need-based and relevant documentation. There should also be access to electronic information such as websites, Internet, email etc.

Networks should make their members aware of new information and communication technologies for speedy and effective information collection and dissemination. There should be sharing of information at the state, inter-state and national levels.

The most appropriate place to influence members is the general body. During the time that an annual general body meeting is held the members can be educated about various issues through a series of thematic discussions. Thus for the members apart from being involved in the process mechanisms of the annual meeting they would get value addition and thus adopt a new direction or change how the network operates to achieve better performance and even change the culture of the network itself.

Influencing or educating, sensitizing, motivating and mobilizing members are important to take collective decisions on an issue, framing of demands for policy interventions, as they are the prime stakeholders in the network.

2. Policy Makers

At their roots, most public policies represent efforts to change the behavior of large institutions and organizations. They are important only if they do so. No matter how well-crafted a public policy, how pure its intent, all is for naught unless the policy is implemented. This

process of converting “good” intentions into “good” results is a good basis for the public to judge the performance of leaders in government.

Nice as it might be to adopt such a neat distinction, it doesn’t work. Most public policies are vague, and their character and purposes change frequently. Different leaders inside governments, both elected and appointed leaders, define policy goals in different ways, at different times — often in an effort to assemble or hold the political coalition necessary to adopt or sustain a given policy.

Also, a different participant in the policy process is likely to put a different spin on policy goals at different times depending on the audience being addressed. Leaders of outside groups know the game. It is not unusual for them when trying to influence policy implementation to change the essence of governmental action. Oversight of implementation by appointed officials can make a big difference.

So we often see that this governmental process of three dimensions — setting policies, paying for their execution, and carrying them out is never realized and thus there is always a wide disparity in realism and subtlety in establishing goals and public programs.

Also we find that most policies that are made or were made are anti-people to some extent leading to further depletion of livelihoods and the earth’s resources and leading to poverty and hunger.

Therefore acquiring the skill of policy analysis is a prerequisite to influence policy at the macro level. Networks need to have information about the different policies concerning the fields of their interest and involvement. The information has to be analyzed through the perspective of the poor, downtrodden and disadvantaged sections of society. The gap between policy formulation and implementation and the alternative suggestions have to be communicated across.

Organizations keep on working at micro levels for years but do not succeed in achieving major successes because the policies at the macro level remain the same and have wider implications. Unless these policies are influenced, desired results cannot be achieved. The network, being the representative of the voluntary organizations, has to make sustained efforts to influence public policies. For this,

networks need to have a better knowledge base about the existing laws and regulations affecting the sector and issues.

The process of making public policy includes formulating solutions to problems of general concern to the public and transforming these solutions into rules. There is a need for people to get involved in the policy-making process to ensure that laws foster the inclusion, independence and empowerment of people.

Passion, anger, frustration and commitment are often necessary but not sufficient characteristics of a policy change agent. In order to advance policy, an effective policy change agent must channel those emotions and beliefs and develop the skills and understanding needed.

The process of developing, negotiating, securing enactment and overseeing the implementation of public policy is a dynamic process. Rarely, if ever, do the same exact situations recur. Thus, it is impossible to describe a “how to” or “paint by the numbers” approach. There are, however, guidelines, principles and strategies that can guide one’s actions.

(a) Research the issue

Networks must firstly recognize the intensity of feelings by the affected persons regarding why it’s critical to develop new or modify existing policy based on historical treatment. Once that is done in an unbiased manner networks become knowledgeable about current policy framework and its strengths and inadequacies and then using the understanding of the historical context explain the nature and scope for needed changes to the current policy.

(b) Articulate Values, Principles and Goals of Policy

Networks must recognize the difference between the old versus the new paradigm of policy, the goals of policy and the equality of opportunity (individualization, inclusion, meaningful opportunity), independent living (skills, services, and supports), economic self-sufficiency (training, education, assistance and supports) and participation (empowerment, self-determination, informed choice at individual and systems level) that the new policy shall create.

(c) Understand the Political Context

Networks need to determine the extent to which a policy is partisan or bipartisan, identify the key players and the role of the policy-makers, determine the nature and extent of controversy that is/ shall be raised by a particular issue and the strength of the opposition while undertaking such an exercise.

(d) Understand the Power of Personal Stories Tied to Policy

Networks should be able to decide policy objective and how to frame the issue and then tie a personal story to the policy objectives and policy options so that policy makers can empathize with the affected. Best personal stories will demonstrate a positive impact of the proposed intervention/change in policy (describe circumstances before and after intervention).

(e) Understand Policy-Maker's Needs

Networks must comprehend the self-interest (re-election, power, status among peers and interest groups), opportune time (balancing priorities), winning of trust (importance of developing long-term relationships) and other viable policy options (data and other supports justifying options) in front of the policy maker.

(f) Understand the Role and Power of Organized Coalitions

Networks must see the composition of the coalition and nontraditional groups, their cohesion, synergy and the kind of skilled individuals performing varied tasks working together. They also need to have a clearer outlook at the leadership (policy entrepreneur) and the devolution of responsibility (carrying out agreed on tasks).

(g) Understand the Need for a Strategic Plan

Networks must ensure that a planned spontaneity (passion, anger, frustration are necessary but not sufficient to effectuate change, need to think strategically and act on basis of a plan) is worked with, keeping in mind a reality check (macro issues, past advocacy efforts and why change is now possible, constraints on achieving success, capacities of coalition and the degree of opposition) while identifying the prize (short-and long-term goals and objectives).

Keeping all these factors in mind networks should decide on an overall strategy and determine how a particular tactic (such as meeting with a policy-maker) fits in, decide on an appropriate vehicle such as modifying a statute, regulation, or guideline, identify the key policy-makers who will assume leadership roles (heroes) and control the dynamics of the debate (frame the issue to garner broad-based support and to create an aura of inevitability) and present to these key policy makers viable policy options based on research and program and fiscal estimates.

(h) Make specific requests to the policy-maker

Networks need to explain why it is important for policy-maker to get involved, request specific action by policy-maker (such as co-sponsor a bill, oppose a certain amendment, speak in support of or in opposition to an amendment, visit a program in the state, give a speech), ask policy-maker to articulate his/her position, solicit reasons/rationales for position and suggest follow-up activities.

(i) Messenger

Understand That Who Delivers the Message is as Important (and often more important) as the Message.

If a renowned person talks about an issue or demand, people would definitely prefer to listen to him / her and this helps in influencing policy to a great extent. Therefore networks need to strategically select the spokesperson(s) who will have maximum influence over policy-makers and ensure that the message is presented in a manner that recognizes the needs of particular policy-makers/staff

(j) Recognize Strengths and Limitations

Networks need to keep an eye on the prize and put ego aside while undertaking such an endeavour. They don't need to agree to a policy option when they are not fully knowledgeable about the same or agree to a policy option on behalf of others whom they don't represent.

They need to strategically select who will make the presentation and thus be able to make inroads into the policy-maker's heart - then to his/her head. They also need to frame the issue explaining how it impacts

others (i.e., it is an issue of general applicability), share policy options, explain the research bases for position and offer to provide any additional information required.

Based on these proven alternatives, networks seek to influence governments to reform policies, regulations and procedures, and adopt new pro-poor policies and strategies. Bringing the voices of poor people into the frame is central to their strategy. In many of the countries where networks work, important policy reforms are underway. Many are seeking to reduce the role of the state, and increase the role of the private sector in a range of services. At the same time, powers are being decentralized to local government levels. Networks are working to increase the extent to which these reforms serve the poor.

There are three pillars or institutions : Government Legislators (Parliament, State Assemblies); Executive (Bureaucracy) and Judiciary (Supreme Court, High Courts in States, District Courts etc.) and they are the policy making bodies. Media plays an important role in influencing policy makers and therefore it is said that there are four types of advocacy – legislative advocacy, judicial advocacy, bureaucratic advocacy and media advocacy. Advocacy is basically an influencing role. How these institutions function and how they can be influenced are discussed below.

A. Legislators

Influencing the System: The Legislative Branch

Legislative advocacy refers to efforts to influence the introduction, enactment, or modification of legislation. This can include lobbying, ballot initiatives, legislative networks and campaigns, and explanations of legislative processes.

Legislative advocacy can also encompass instruction on how to conduct campaigns, educating legislators, communications strategies to implement lobbying campaigns, rules regarding lobbying, building legislative networks, and tracking legislation and committee votes.

The three levels of government—central, state and local—all institute the making of laws, by-laws and regulations. New laws are introduced and old ones changed or thrown out for a number of reasons. For

example, the people may elect a new government, which means Parliament is suddenly controlled by a party with different ideas about many matters.

A new Parliament will probably make many new laws, often as a result of promises that the new government members made to the people just before the election. Even without a change of government, a minister may be persuaded by public opinion to introduce a new law or change an existing one. Parliament makes new laws or changes old ones by the following procedure:

- ❑ A minister draws up a proposal for a new law or group of laws (this is called a Bill) and seeks approval from State Cabinet. The Bill has to fall within the minister's responsibility. The Health Minister will deal with laws about medical care, and the Education Minister will handle matters about school.
- ❑ If Cabinet approves, the Parliamentary Committee (an expert on drafting legislation) prepares the Bill which is then presented to the Cabinet and all government members of Parliament.
- ❑ If approved, it is then introduced into Parliament by the Minister for its 'first reading'. At this stage the bill is printed and copies distributed to all members of Parliament.
- ❑ The Bill then proceeds through a 'second reading' (at which stage the minister gives details of what the Bill is intended to achieve in the community) and then the Committee Stage. At this point, the Bill is discussed and debated by members, and sometimes changes or amendments are suggested and may be included in the Bill.
- ❑ The 'third reading' then takes place. This does not usually involve any further debate, and the Parliament then votes. Once the government gets the Bill through all stages in Parliament, it is sent to the President for assent. When assent is given, the Bill becomes the law and then, instead of being called a Bill, it is described as an Act of Parliament.

The ways in which networks can influence legislative branch activity are almost limitless.

Some of the many things networks can do include:

- ❑ Suggest ideas for new laws and or amendment in the existing laws and draft them up;
- ❑ Build public support and educate others about an issue;
- ❑ Draw attention to proposed laws by working with the media;
- ❑ Testify as to the merits of bills;
- ❑ Analyze budgets and offer alternatives, and
- ❑ Lobby for, or against, passage of various bills and budget items.

Some situations offer special opportunities. For example, the fact that most state legislators have little or no paid staff makes them heavily reliant on others to seek ideas for legislation, provide the research, and even identify potential witnesses for hearings. In effect, networks can act as “staff” for the legislators. At the national level, where there is paid staff, meeting with staff can often be as good as (or sometimes better than) meeting with their bosses. All can use the help of good advocates.

Advocacy groups have a special role to play. For example, they can bring up issues that would otherwise get missed (like the lack of services for emotionally troubled youth). Advocates can assure that those directly affected (in this case, the families of troubled teens) do not find themselves waging lonely battles for better policies, and can spread the word to likely allies. And advocates can push the limits of a debate, thus insuring that something more than the easy, politically popular causes, get attention.

Sometimes social advocates build on past victories. Advocates for people have won a series of stunning legislative victories using a variety of techniques - drafting laws, testifying, using media, staging protests, lobbying for passage.

Those laws did not come from some Representative, or well-paid lobbyist; they sprang directly from the mouths, pens, fact sheets, lives,

and lobbying of countless people with disabilities, their families, friends, and advocates. When each of those bills was signed by a President, it marked one more victory - won not by some wealthy, insider elite, but by ordinary networks, including those most directly affected.

Case no. 3: Influencing policy makers : INDIA

Who makes laws?

In India, the lawmaking bodies are the Parliament at the central level and the Legislative Assemblies and Councils at the state level. The Parliament consists of two houses: the Lok Sabha or “House of the people” and the Rajya Sabha or “Council of States”.

How is a law made?

The process of enacting new laws can be broadly divided into four steps:

Step 1: The need for the law is identified. This may be done either by the government or by citizen groups who can raise public awareness regarding the need for the law. Sometimes individual Members of Parliament (MP’s) can introduce Bills in Parliament as ways to highlight the need for a law.

Step 2: When the government decides that there is a need for a particular law, it chalks out the main issues that need to be addressed. The draft of a proposal for a new law is called a ‘Bill’. The Bill is drafted by the concerned ministry and then sent to the Law Ministry for inputs. It is then presented to the Cabinet for approval.

Step 3: After the Cabinet approves the bill, it is introduced in Parliament. Under the Indian, political system, Parliament is the central legislative (or law making) body. Any bill goes through three reading in both Houses before it becomes an Act.

❑ During the First Reading the Bill is introduced.

❑ After a Bill has been introduced, the Presiding Officer of the concerned House (Speaker in the case of Lok Sabha, Chairman in case of the Rajya Sabha) can refer the Bill to the concerned Departmentally Related Standing Committee for examination. The Standing Committee considers the broad objectives and the specific clauses of the Bill referred to it. The Committee can also seek the opinion of

experts and various stakeholders. The Standing Committee then submits its recommendations in the form of a Report.

❑ In the Second Reading, the Bill is scrutinized thoroughly. Each clause of the Bill is discussed and may be accepted, amended or rejected.

❑ During the Third Reading, the House votes on the re-drafted Bill.

❑ If the Bill is passed, it is then sent to the other House, where it goes through the same process (except being revised by a Standing Committee)

Step 4: After both Houses of Parliament pass a Bill, it is presented to the President for his assent. He has the right to seek information and clarification about the Bill and may return it to Parliament for reconsideration. (This may be done only once. If both Houses pass the Bill again, the President has to give his assent). After the President gives his assent, the Bill is notified as an Act. Subsequently, rules and regulations to implement the Act are framed by the concerned Ministry, and tabled in Parliament.

Is the above process always followed?

This process is almost always followed. However some Bills may not be referred to a Standing Committee.

How is public participation possible during the process of lawmaking?

Step 1: The role which can be played by the Citizens Groups before and while the Bill is being drafted.

The case of the Right to Information Act as cited below is an example of citizens groups coming forward to participate in legislative action and the process of lawmaking. Beginning with a movement started by a group of citizens, the law eventually became operational in October 2005.

Right to Information Act, 2005

The campaign for the right to information was started by a group of workers in a village in Rajasthan when the government for work done during a famine did not pay them. They formed a citizens group, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS). This group was supported by social activists like Aruna Roy and the press, and led to the formation of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) in 1996.

NCPRI organized various meetings / seminars / consultations to educate, sensitize, motivate and mobilize people at large including policy makers, media etc.

The NCPRI and the Press Council of India formulated an initial draft of the right to information law in 1996. The government introduced the Freedom of Information Bill in 2002.

In August 2004, the NCPRI suggested a set of amendments to the Freedom of Information Act, 2002. The National Advisory Council (NAC) endorsed many of these proposals, and the government introduced the Right to Information Bill in December 2004. The law was enacted in 2005.

Step 2: When the government asks for a response and feedback Even before a Bill has been drafted, the relevant ministry might choose to advertise and seek inputs from experts and citizens.

B. Bureaucracy

Influencing the System: The Executive Branch

At the most basic level, administrative advocacy refers to any attempt to understand and intercede in the rulemaking process on the state, or local level. It can include efforts to influence regulatory issues, the shaping of executive branch and agency budgets and grants, teaching or assisting others with the filing of comments on governmental actions and proposed regulations, monitoring program operations, engaging others in the practice of monitoring regulations and guidelines that control implementation of legislation, directing public attention to proposed regulations, or challenging policies or regulations in courts when they are inconsistent with the law.

The role of bureaucracy is essential to the process of policy making. They draft laws and rules, and scrutinize them. Their concerns and activities cover almost fields of state affairs; watering, politics and law, economics, recruitment and personnel, defense, diplomacy, etc.

The bureaucrats also serve as :

Advocate – Fighting for or representing the interests of a class, group, or cause

Broker – Mediating or resolving political conflicts and conflicts among interests

Networks can influence executive branch policy in many ways. They can:

- ❑ Monitor program operation or serve as volunteers;
- ❑ Serve on agency advisory bodies;
- ❑ File comments on the regulations that govern how laws/programs are implemented;
- ❑ Call public attention to proposed regulations;
- ❑ Ask their elected representatives to monitor programs and comment on draft regulations;
- ❑ Challenge policies or regulations in the courts whenever they prove inconsistent with the law.
- ❑ Participate in the decision making process of an agency.

Policy advocates play a critical role when they work to influence the regulations that carry out laws. It is an activity that has proved to be increasingly important.

Laws are often written in language that is deliberately vague. So, after a law is passed, the relevant executive branch agency has to draw up regulations - which are the rules that actually govern day-to-day operation of the programs. Thanks to various efforts by networks every proposed regulation has to be published in a document (which is available in every government depository library, many local public libraries, and on-line).

Networks usually use the opportunity given to them to recommend changes in the regulations before they are finalized. The opportunity to comment can be a formidable power, especially since once they are issued in final form, regulations have the force of law.

Networks can also insure that programs operate as they should on an on-going basis by serving on advisory groups, monitoring programs, and issuing public reports. The day-to-day quality of nursing homes, job training programs, public art, or school meals in many communities is directly related to the presence (or absence) of networks who monitor their operation and publicize their findings.

Even something as wide-ranging as the Ban Alcohol movements is made up of ordinary networks, people willing to pay attention to the details of zoning proceedings.

C. Judiciary

Influencing the System: The Judiciary

Judicial advocacy involves the promotion of more responsible and accountable judicial, legal, and law enforcement systems and practices. Efforts include lawsuits, preparing amicus briefs, providing information on court cases, and developing reference and educational tools.

Judiciary normally does not make any policies / rules but make policy and legal decisions. Regulators and judges do more than choose policies or apply legal doctrines, they also make choices about the instruments through which a policy or legal decision is made. These choices are often so critical to the viability of the administrative or legal decision that they have taken on strategic significance for regulators and judges. They are strategic in that an originating actor choosing one instrument over another can affect the ability of a competing actor to review and override the originating actor's policy decision. Decision costs are a key component of the strategic calculus. Resource constrained actors may trade off their own institutional efficiency, which could be achieved best through one particular instrument for a more burdensome choice, but which imposes even greater relative decision costs on competing actors.

The judicial branch is widely and correctly seen as the branch most removed from influence by citizens, but this does not mean there is no such thing as judicial advocacy. While organizations or citizens should not engage in the direct lobbying of judges or juries, several techniques can be used to influence policy through the judicial system.

Networks can influence the judiciary by:

- ❑ Participate in Friend-of-the-Court (Amicus) briefs.
- ❑ File, threaten, or cooperate in a lawsuit.
- ❑ Take part in an appeals process. Or,
- ❑ Serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Guardian Ad Litem - or similar program associated with the courts.

❑ Public Interest Litigation (PIL)

The Judiciary is rightly thought of as the branch of government least susceptible to citizen influence, but that is true chiefly in terms of traditional lobbying. We cannot (and should not) try to lobby judges. But that is not the only way for networks to have an impact through the courts. Lawsuits, complaints, PILs, and Friend-of-the-Court briefs are all useful tools.

At the local level, sometimes the threat of a lawsuit is enough to get action. Or, networks can file complaints if they believe a law is being ignored. Citizen complaints have resulted in better action on child/adult abuse reports, more thorough investigations by nursing home licensing bodies, and increased access to public transportation for people with physical limitations.

Sometimes the best vehicle for judicial participation is by filing, or agreeing to sign onto, a Friend-of-the-Court brief which lays out the views of people with direct knowledge of the impact a Court decision is likely to have.

E.g., Courts at all levels want to get a broad spectrum of public opinion on the right-to-die issue from religious, consumer, and advocacy organizations - particularly as more cases involving the terminally ill and people in "a persistent vegetative state," move through the courts.

And advocates can help others go through an administrative appeals process whenever they feel a benefit has been unfairly denied by the wording or application of the relevant regulations. Appeals of benefit denials are won far more often when a knowledgeable advocate accompanies a claimant. And while it is possible to get help from a legal services or legal aid office, the advocate in an appeal need not be a lawyer or even a paralegal - knowledgeable advocates come from many backgrounds.

D. Media

Influencing the System: Media

The media by itself does not do any policy making or is in any way involved in the policy making process but plays a crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion: it communicates the world to

individuals, and it reproduces modern society's self-image.

The explosion in the number of television programmes, news channels, newspapers, magazines, Web sites and chat rooms has given rise to a series of experts such as consumer advocates, healthcare professionals, financial experts, political analysts, defence analysts, media commentators and other opinion makers who are gradually becoming popular names in common households.

The media's focus on the current issues and events of the day and the collection and editing of this information for presentation through the news media – newspapers, television and radio – is the practice of journalism.

Journalism, however, is not a flawless exercise. In his 1978 speech to collect a Pulitzer Prize, David Broder of the Washington Post, said:

"I would like to see us say over and over until the point has been made...that the newspaper that drops on your doorstep is a partial, hasty, incomplete, inevitably somewhat flawed and inaccurate rendering of some of the things we heard about in the past 24 hours...distorted despite our best efforts to eliminate gross bias by the very process of compression that makes it possible for you...to read it in about an hour. If we labeled the paper accurately then we would immediately add: But it's the best we could do under the circumstances, and we will be back tomorrow with a corrected updated version..."

Likewise, the events and issues that become news each and every day, also go through a process of selection which is not without its own imperfections. News is a choice, an extraction process, saying that one event is more meaningful than another event. The very act of saying that means making judgments that are based on values and based on frames (*mental structures that shape the way we see the world*).

In simple terms, the media, when asked, define their role as:

- ❑ To inform
- ❑ To educate
- ❑ To entertain

The radio, TV and newspapers give us information through news, current affairs programs, and talk shows. They also entertain through

TV soaps, films, game shows, music and sitcoms. It is through advertisements on radio, TV and in the newspapers, that we know about goods and services for sale.

The media do this by providing information that is collected and edited based on the media guiding principles of accuracy, fairness and balanced representation.

The media also see their key role in any society as a ‘watchdog’ of the government and all entities to ensure accountability in a society in the public’s interest.

The media’s ability to carry out this role depends greatly on whether the media operate within political and legal environments which enable free speech, reasonably unfettered access to information, free media, and economic and political environments which encourage and promote the development of a diversity of media.

Because the process of collecting, editing and choosing what is news is not purely objective, media and communications researchers and analysts have identified several other key roles the media play in any society:

- ❑ Shape public opinion and attitudes
- ❑ Determine the public discourse and thereby shape our political, cultural and economic priorities
- ❑ Influence public policy through the news agenda
- ❑ Reinforce or challenge gender, racial and other stereotypes and norms
- ❑ Serve as the channel through which the public communicates to policy makers and through which policy makers communicate to the public
- ❑ Media can act as catalysts for social change through coverage of injustices and the marginalization of populations in society which often have little access to expression in the public sphere. In other words, the media can give a voice to those who often find their voices marginalized

Understanding the media’s various roles, its power and sphere of influence and the role it can play in bringing about change are essential for any type of advocacy that aims to change the media.

It is important to understand that the media do not just provide information and reports on news events and current issues. Through the selection of types of news stories, choice of words and language used, choice of people interviewed to give their views and perspectives, selection of images to illustrate stories and decisions about where stories should be placed (on what pages or which item in the news line-up heard on radio or television), the media also communicates and sends a message.

Thus by influencing the media, Awareness, Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior changes can be visualized:

Expanded public and private dialogue and debate (awareness)

- Coverage and discussion in the news media?
- Problem solving dialogue?
- Focus and discussion in entertainment media?
- Debate and dialogue in the political process?

Increased accuracy of the information that people share in the dialogue/debate

- Are people becoming more informed about the issue?
- Are stereotypes being dispelled?
- Are people discussing different perspectives on the issue?

Shifting attitudes

- Are there signs of increased sensitivity on the issue?
- Are people more accepting of different perspectives on the issue?
- Is there reflection on existing social norms and cultural values (that currently might stand in the way of behavioral change)?

Change in behavior

- Are people taking action as a result of being informed and influenced?
- What are their actions, and what outcomes are emerging?

- Are people getting involved in campaigns, becoming advocates themselves?
- How sustained has this behavioral change been to date, and what signs are there of the change being sustained in the future?

This methodology shall help networks in approaching media owners, publishers, editors, advertisers, journalists, among others, with findings which reflect the mirror back onto the media itself, and thus open the door to change.

It has also been found that among the fraternity of the fourth estate, certain journalists are identified to be the think tanks for various political parties.

They are the ones whom the political parties pay special attention to and to whose voice / ideology they freely ascribe to. A collaborative relationship and regular interaction with them shall help in educating, sensitizing and mobilizing them for creating public opinion and influencing the policy makers.

3. System of governance

In a democracy where every voice and vote counts, doing nothing is a political act; it is a vote for the status quo. Staying out of the process does not mean that laws will not get passed; it just means they will get passed without reflecting your priorities and wishes, or those of anyone you might speak for - especially those who have been disabled or abused, ill or in pain, troubled or poor.

That also applies to the role of a person as a citizen in a democracy: being informed is not enough. You have to decide what you want from your government, what you are willing to pay for it, and engage with your elected representatives so they can help you get it. This is where networks play an important role.

I. Networks influence at the national level the Parliament, Provincial Assemblies, District Bodies etc., National & State Commissions formed by the government, Judicial bodies, Law commission, Law Universities etc., and institutions of Local self governance

1. Parliament, Provincial Assemblies, District Bodies etc.

A Parliament is a legislative body, especially in those countries whose system of government is based on the Westminster system modelled after that of the United Kingdom. Parliaments may consist of *chambers* or *houses*, and are usually either bicameral or unicameral - although more complex models exist, or have existed.

The lower house is almost always the originator of legislation, and the upper house is usually the body that offers the “second look” and decides whether to veto or approve the bills. A Parliament’s lower house is usually composed of at least 200 members in countries with populations of over 3 million. The number of seats may exceed 400 in very large countries. The upper house customarily has 20, 50, or 100 seats, almost always significantly fewer than the lower house. A nation’s prime minister (“PM”) is almost always the leader of the majority party in the lower house of Parliament, but only holds his or her office as long as the “confidence of the house” is maintained.

Broadly speaking, Parliament has the following primary functions:

- ❑ It makes the laws that govern the country;
- ❑ It holds the executive accountable for the implementation of laws and policies; and
- ❑ It provides a debating forum around matters of public and political interest.

Network cannot influence Parliament directly but can do so through influencing its constituent bodies or members in the following manner:

- a. **Parliamentary Committees** - Parliamentary committees are formed to investigate complex issues in society and their reports influence government and parliament decisions. Most committees undertake public inquiries and invite community submissions. Expressing the networks views to a committee, either in writing or in person, is a direct way of having your case taken into account as new legislation, policies or decisions are being developed or being implemented. Some of the known committees are Commit-

tee on Industry, Committee on Petitions, Committee on Papers Laid on the Table, Committee on Ethics, Committee on Government Assurances, Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law & Justice etc.

b. Petitions - A traditional way of bringing an issue to the attention of Parliament, and mobilizing some public opinion in the process, is to present a petition to Parliament through a member. Petitions have a set format, which must be followed.

c. Lobbying - Any attempt by individuals, groups or organisations to make their views known to politicians in the hope of influencing political decisions, can be called “lobbying”. It is a legal and accepted practice within a democratic system.

Effective lobbying involves a clear understanding of the issues, awareness of the particular member’s politics and interests, understanding of government and parliamentary processes, understanding of how the issue could be resolved by Parliament, and effective communication skills. Many worker, employer and particular interest organisations exist mainly to represent their interests to government and the media. Some individuals or firms operate as professional lobbyists, offering their skills and knowledge to organisations which want their case to be put up effectively.

d. Contacting Members of Parliament - Phone, write, fax, email or visit a member of either House of Parliament, especially your local member, to express your views, concerns and proposals. In many cases they can assist with problems, take action on your behalf, or represent you with or refer you to someone who can assist. Your views will help them understand community feelings about issues and may help them to make up their own minds. They may pass your concerns on to an appropriate minister or officer. In some cases, they will raise your concerns in the Parliament.

e. Contacting Ministers - On some issues you may wish to phone, write, fax, email or visit the Premier or an appropriate Cabinet Minister. Written contacts are usually most effective, initially as actually getting appointments to visit may be difficult at first.

f. Working Through Political Parties - Political parties generally develop policies through formal and informal consultative processes at local, branch and state or national levels. These are often formalized at party conferences. Development of policies and issues can be promoted or influenced from both within (by party members) and from outside, by contact with members and officers of the party. This may involve supporting particular candidates who would promote the issue. Influencing election manifestos of various parties are the best way to influence the political parties. Once these parties commit a theme / issue in their election manifesto then it is very difficult for them to back out and they can be monitored in what they promise and what they fulfill.

g. Working with Independents and Minor Parties - Much the same applies as with other members or parties. However, while independents and minor parties may not be well resourced and would hardly ever be part of government, they are sometimes in a better position than major parties to promote particular issues, especially if the government is a coalition government and dependent on support of smaller parties or independent members of the house. In particular, the proportional electoral system through which the Legislative Council (the Upper House) is elected means that independents and minor party representatives generally control the balance of power between the major parties, so that their voice is certainly heard.

h. Taking Action Through Government Departments - In many cases, the most appropriate way of resolving an issue is to directly contact the government department or agency involved (or the minister responsible for it) by mail, phone or personal visit. All agencies have personnel and procedures to assist or deal with issues.

i. Using Administrative Courts and Tribunals - A variety of courts and tribunals exist which are accessible to the public and can deal with specific disputes with public bodies and agencies. The Equal Opportunities Tribunal, the Anti-Discrimination Board, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and specialist compensation boards make determinations in the same way as courts after hearing disputes specific to their area of concern.

- j. **Taking Other Legal Action** - The legal system, particularly the Supreme and High Courts, can be used to challenge the actions of government. Courts decide whether the laws passed by Parliament are valid, and interpret what these laws mean in practice. Whilst legal action can be very effective, it can be expensive and is usually a last resort when other approaches have failed.
- k. **Direct Action** - Reasonable freedom of speech and action within the law are an important and colorful aspect of traditional democracy. Demonstrations, public speechmaking, pickets, street marches, public meetings, use of signs and banners, handing out pamphlets to the public, and so forth, are legal ways of attempting to generate and demonstrate public support for an issue and influence decision-makers. The action should stay within the law, respecting the usual rights of individuals and protection of private and public property. Such actions may gain media coverage (though not necessarily the kind of coverage hoped for) but rarely have much immediate direct impact on Parliament or Government. They will be most effective when part of a larger strategy.

2. *National & State Commissions formed by the government*

The government sets up various national and state commissions to review and assess the existing policy and legal framework and their impact from the ecological, scientific, economic, social and cultural points of view. These commissions look into issues such as Human Rights, Women Rights, Minorities Rights, Scheduled Castes and Tribes Rights etc. Such commissions are created by Parliament and also possess legal jurisdiction.

These commissions examine the current status of administration and institutions related with that particular subject or issue, both at the national and State level, to meet the emerging needs of society. These Commissions recommend specific policy options for achieving sustainable management and development, besides suggesting ways and means to make administration more effective to achieve policy goals.

Usually in each commission there are around 5 to 10 members. They can only give recommendations, which may or may not be accepted by the ruling party or government but are legal in nature. The

advantages of these commissions are that all of them are mini-legislatures.

Networks can influence these national and state commissions formed by the government and thus seek to change the way policies are created, administered and implemented.

3. *Quasi Judicial bodies, Tribunals etc.*

A **quasi-judicial** body is an individual or organisation which has powers resembling those of a court of law or judge and is able to remedy a situation or impose legal penalties on a person or organisation. Such bodies usually have powers of adjudication in such matters as: breach of discipline, conduct rules, trust in the matters of money or otherwise etc. Their powers are usually limited to a particular area of expertise.

Awards and verdicts often depend on a pre-determined set of guidelines or punishment depending on the nature and gravity of the offence committed. Such punishment may be legally enforceable under the law of a country, it can be challenged in a court of law which is the final decisive authority.

Networks can influence these through investigating or ascertaining facts and drawing conclusions from them as the foundation for official actions.

4. *Local self governance*

Influencing the local self government

Government and its functions may be classified into National, Provincial or State and Local. The administration of a locality or small community such as village, town or a city, by the body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising a part at least of its revenue through local taxation and spending the proceeds on services, is called Local Self- Government.

Networks can influence these institutions of Local Self- Government easily because they are accessible and locally based, by ensuring that the Constitutional provisions relating to them are implemented in letter and spirit.

They also see that the provisions are conducive to the enjoyment of the fruits of democracy through the utmost participation of the sovereign people in the process of governance by way of decentralization.

They can help influence the institutionalization process of development by enhancing the participation of all the people including the ethnic communities, indigenous people and down-trodden as well as socially and economically backward groups in bringing out social equality in mobilizing and allocating means for the development of their own region and in the balanced and equal distribution of the fruits of development.

Networks can also help influence in such a manner that responsibility and power at the local level is present to formulate and carry out plans, and constitute local bodies for the development of the local self-governance system in a manner that they are able to make decisions on the matters affecting the day-to-date needs and lives of the people, by developing local leadership.

In India, institutions of local self-governance (district, block or taluka level and village panchayats) are easily accessible by people as they are locally based and elected representatives and live quite close to the people themselves as compared to the members of Parliament or State Assemblies. NGOs and their networks are in regular touch with such bodies and may at times provide expert opinions or technical support to them and therefore carry great influencing power.

II. Networks influence at the international level various bodies such as the World Bank, WTO, United Nations etc.

It's a well-worn maxim that with economic power comes political influence. "He who has the gold makes the rules," as Samuel J LeFrak put it. As one of America's richest real estate magnates, LeFrak spoke with a certain authority about making the rules.

Over the past two decades or so, the rules that regulate international trade and investment have been changed dramatically. A wave of liberalization, privatization and deregulation, brought in through organisations such as the WTO, the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) and the World Bank, has allowed corporations to grow enormously in size, power and influence in the world economy. These policies have generated colossal wealth for multinational companies, and their existence owes a great deal to the influence of business lobbying.

It is only natural, of course, that corporations seek to shape the policies that affect how they do business in the global economy. They have a legitimate interest in doing so, and governments have a duty to listen to their advice.

The policy-making process of all such organisations are non-democratic, non-transparent and systematically skewed in favor of rich countries. Developing countries have been repeatedly pushed into accepting agreements that damage their interests, and have been prevented from introducing trade rules that would promote poor people's rights.

More than half of the poorest countries have no representation. This leaves over 80 million people without a voice. Governments often sign up agreements without sufficient reference to national public opinion or parliamentary scrutiny, and they do not always stand up for the rights of their poorest citizens. Poor people and their representatives cannot hope to match the millions of dollars that corporations funnel into their sophisticated global lobbying campaigns and advocacy networks.

Deeply concerned with the many negative aspects of globalization and the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of international economic institutions—the WTO, IMF, World Bank and also TNCs—and a few governments, networks have particularly been active in pinpointing the negative impacts of the present world economic and financial systems, especially by organizing forceful events at international summits and utilizing more actively Internet technology.

Increasingly, networks are combining their advocacy campaigns with distinct alternative proposals for and initiations of existing patterns of socio-economic inequalities and deprivation. At the same time, the ability of networks to act in a cohesive fashion may be constrained by

increasing differentiation along the lines of those with access to power, influence and funding.

They carry out their influencing role by:

- (a) Educating, sensitizing, motivating personnel / organisations about issues that are anti-people in their outlook by providing In-depth country studies undertaken with the objective of examining the resourcefulness, capacity and potential for action in national and local contexts.
- (b) Critique the current proposal(s) being offered or provide an alternative to the proposal(s)
- (c) Have a dialogue with the country representative at various forums pre and post events so that there is an understanding of the main conceptual and methodological questions involved in the diversity of contemporary global civil society movements
- (d) Apply public pressure on policy makers through supportive or obstructive means of mass mobilization at the regional or global level to influence international debate and implementing concrete action plans.

The collapse of the WTO negotiations in Cancun and then again at Hong Kong signaled a very important global development. It indicated that very strong demonstrations in global civil society, including the peasant movements all over the world, have increased their degree of influence and intensified their effectiveness as a third global power in world affairs, a third power in addition to the state and the market. Many government delegates consciously and repeatedly thanked civil society organizations and networks for the technical assistance and advocacy they provided especially for developing economies. This collapse also showed that, in terms of balance of power, transnational corporations do not have as strong an influence over governments when global civil society is unified against hegemonic corporate and state interests.

4. Mindset of people at large

Networks work towards enhancing interactions between various actors of civil society such as corporate and cooperative sectors, media, donors, bureaucracy, intelligentsia, political parties etc, for changing the mindset of people at large and for forming broad alliances and fostering partnership building. Here it is essential to differentiate between partnership and relationship building with those actors who are very important. Partnership involves a definite give and take process with the partners coming together with a formed objective. Relationship, on the other hand, may or may not involve the element of mutual benefit. So in a partnership, either bilateral or multilateral, the concerned partners have to be convinced about their benefits as a result of the partnership. Therefore, networks while making alliances with any of the above-mentioned actors have to look for issues in their areas of interest.

There is no magic to advocacy. "Average citizens" have power to effect policy and policy makers at all levels of government. By making a commitment to securing justice for all, citizens can create a better environment for those who are most vulnerable to the social and economic ills of our society.

A citizen's voice can make a difference. Without citizens, just laws would be impossible to pass. Whether responding to a bill at the local, state, or national level, it is important to remember that elected representatives must pay attention to citizens, the constituent. The informed citizen can exercise his/her influence in many ways. A citizen's voice can move legislators to vote compassionately on certain issues and change language in a bill to include protection for the poor. When morally motivated people use their political freedom effectively to translate their opinions into constructive policies, justice will prevail.

If a network is serious about influencing public policy, they must become informed about the issues. Learn the facts. Understand the pros and cons of specific issues. Try to discern the ethical values in a public policy question.

Networks thus educate, sensitize, motivate and help people to move towards a progressive agenda by influencing their mindset towards change for the better.

5. Those who can influence policy makers and policy bodies

Networks also tend to influence people who are at prime positions who can change the mindset / frame of operations of the government.

There are certain key stakeholders in this namely senior and respected journalists, retired but honest bureaucrats, judges, chief justices and politicians (Party Presidents, Former Prime Ministers or Presidents), intellectuals (respected by politicians), national award winners, who have the power to change the ways that things work or the way policies are formulated or implemented.

Networks can seek out these key stakeholders and use evidence to bring about pro-poor policies through:

- **Inspire:** generate support for an issue or action; raise new ideas or question old ones; create new ways of framing an issue or 'policy narratives'.
- **Inform:** represent the views of others; share expertise and experience; put forward new approaches.
- **Improve:** add, correct or change policy issues; hold policymakers accountable; evaluate and improve own activities, particularly regarding service provision; learn from each other.

All these activities networks tend to do through the mechanism of advocacy.

Advocacy is a mode of social action to influence those who hold governmental, political and economic power. It is "a tool, based on organized efforts and actions that use the instruments of democracy to strengthen democratic processes. Such tools include election related work, lobbying, mass mobilization, forms of civil disobedience, negotiations and bargaining, and court actions" (David Cohen). Access to information is a prerequisite for advocacy initiative. Information about public policies—who makes them, how they are made, how to analyze and influence a public policy, how to lobby with policy

makers to obtain desired changes—are the areas which lead to effective advocacy work. Also they ought to know about the laws, rules and regulations governing the voluntary sector. Networks need to build their capacity in these areas to have a better impact.

The dream that one dreams alone is a dream of one's own. The dream that is dreamt together is a reality

– Raul Seixas, *Prelude*

The verse above, from a popular Brazilian song, expresses the core reason why CSOs are increasingly building and working through networks as a key strategy for advocacy: collective action – based on a common dream that another world is possible – is necessary to promote social change. Passion, synergy and solidarity are essential elements of every struggle for rights.

Over the last three decades networks have become important in coordinating the advocacy of CSOs, bringing together people with the same passion for justice and rights. They allow the development of new insights through the interaction of different perspectives and approaches. They enhance linkages between policy processes, bringing new contacts and spheres of influence, reaching a wider range of public debate and decision-making arenas.

They are also a site for the empowerment and capacity building of members, strengthening their potential and confidence.

There is a great variety of ways cooperation and joint action can manifest itself. Whatever word used (networks, coalitions, federations, alliances etc), it is important to understand the essential characteristics of what we are calling networks:

Networks are built and sustained by relationships and trust. Their power and energy to promote change comes from a combination of diversity (many organisations and people with different identities and profiles) and a common passion and purpose.

6. What is Advocacy?

"Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcome-including policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social

system and institutions- that directly affect people's lives"

"Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy decisions." (CARE)

- ❑ Advocacy is a logical argument for a change in policies and practices on a specific issue.
- ❑ Advocacy is the process of resolving a conflict or a problem in a democratic manner.

When the beneficiary is an individual, the advocacy effort could be considered as private help. But when efforts are directed towards the benefit of the public at large, or a large group of individuals, they could be regarded as public advocacy.

"Public Advocacy is a planned and organized set of actions to effectively influence public policies and to have them implemented in a way that would empower the marginalized. In a liberal democratic culture, it uses the instruments of democracy and adopts non-violent and constitutional means" (NCAS).

"Advocacy is like a Swiss knife, consisting of several gadgets but collectively known as a knife" (NCAS). For advocacy, social advocates use various tools (research, documentation, mass mobilization, PIL's, media etc.) like the various gadgets of a swiss knife but in totality it is advocacy.

According to David Cohen, the working definition of advocacy is:

"Organized efforts and actions that use the instruments of democracy to strengthen democratic processes. These instruments can include elections, lobbying, mass mobilization, civil disobedience, negotiations, bargaining, and court actions. Efforts and actions are designed to persuade and influence those who hold governmental, political and economic power so that they will formulate, adopt and implement public policy in ways that lives of those with less conventional political power and fewer economic resources. Advocacy has a purposeful result: to change society's institutions as well as the power relationships within and among the institutions such that those with less conventional political power and fewer economic resources acquire a greater share of each."

Advocacy involves resisting patriarchy at various levels; from personal to public, from family to governance.

It also includes:

- ❑ engaging institutions of governance to empower the marginalized as well as
- ❑ creating and using spaces available within the system;
- ❑ using strategically knowledge, skills and opportunities to influence public policy;
- ❑ bridging the gap between micro level activities and macro level policy initiatives;
- ❑ adopting non-violent and constitutional means.

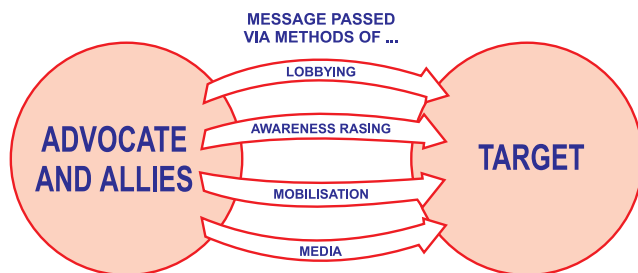
7. What is involved in advocacy?

Advocacy involves:

- ❑ **Asking Why?** until you get to the root of the problem
- ❑ **Ensuring power is used well**, enabling those without power to gain access to it, and helping those who feel powerless to see what power they already have
- ❑ **Education** of the powerless and the powerful
- ❑ **Seeking justice** for those who are oppressed or treated unfairly
- ❑ **Bringing change** for individuals, through changing their personal situation and through changing systems, structures and policies
- ❑ **Being a voice** for the voiceless and enabling the voiceless to find their own voice.

Important activities in advocacy:

- ❑ **Capacity building** so that the poor will become agents of change themselves
- ❑ **Networking** in order to pool resources
- ❑ **Good research** so that the problem and potential solutions can be clearly identified



The overall objective is to change the particular policies or practices of the target for the benefit of the poor.

The advocacy objectives are based on good research. They should be presented as a clear message directed at those who have the power to bring about change (the targets) or those that can influence them. These advocacy activities are done by those working to bring about the change (the advocate and allies and those affected by a situation) and will be communicated through a variety of methods and activities.

This will all come together to form an advocacy strategy, the practical process of formulating and implementing. ■

C H A P T E R

5

Sustainability of Networks

Sustainability of Networks

Why do some networks / organizations thrive, even in the face of the chaos, complexity and rapid change that mark today's landscape? Why do others struggle or fail? Why do some leaders get stuck, in financial crisis, technological change, process problems, or [especially] the management of people, while others seem to flow around these obstacles like a mountain stream around its bed of boulders?

What does it take for environmental, conservation, and community groups to create networks that can truly sustain themselves and their critical work for the long haul? How can current leaders modify and structure their work so that future leaders will have a dynamic and stable organization? What types of processes enable groups to adapt and change with the needs and context of their community issues?

The following “ingredients” outline key elements for organizational or network leaders to consider as they grapple with these questions and seek to create sustainable networks.

1. Clear and articulated vision, mission, strategies and goals

Networks need to establish a strategic framework for significant success. This framework consists of:

- a. a vision for your future,
- b. a mission that defines what you are doing,
- c. values that shape your actions,
- d. strategies that zero in on your key success approaches, and
- e. goals and action plans to guide your daily, weekly and monthly actions.

A network's success depends on how well it defines and lives by each of these important concepts.

a. Vision Statement

A vision is a statement about what the network wants to become or achieve. It should resonate with all members of the network and help them feel proud, excited, and part of something much bigger than themselves. It should articulate the overreaching, long-term goals of the network. It is a look beyond the present to see what could be. A vision statement should assert what the organization can be at its best.

A vision should stretch the network's capabilities and image of itself. It gives shape and direction to the network's future. Shorter vision statements are more appropriate as people will tend to remember their shorter network vision. An effective vision statement is vivid, something you can describe, that people can picture in their minds. The statement itself is concise, motivating, and memorable.

At *all* levels, a clear, concise statement of vision is essential to focus the efforts of all on both the goals and the values of the organization.

"Where there is no vision, people perish." Where there is no vision, the organization, unit, or team flounders from one crisis to the next with no understanding of goals and objectives.

"When you don't care where you are going, it doesn't matter which way you go" (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll). But, if we *know* the vision, *recognize* the core values of our institution, and *understand* the way our organization functions, we can *point the way* to the future, and *empower* all to work in concert toward the common goal.

b. Mission Statement

While the vision statement serves to unite people by pointing toward a destination, the mission specifies how the organization will get there. A well formulated mission outlines the who, what, and why. It identifies at minimum the type of organisation it is, its stakeholders and its goals. Mission or Purpose is a precise description of what a network does. It should describe the business the network is in. It is a definition of "why" the network exists currently. Each member of a

network should be able to verbally express this mission. Unlike vision statements, which by definition are brief, mission statements may vary in length, from a couple of paragraphs to several pages.

Additionally, each person needs a mission for his or her life. The alignment of your life mission with your network's mission is one of the key factors in whether you are happy with your work and workplace. If they are incongruent, you are likely dissatisfied with your work choice.

The primary importance of the mission statement means that failure to clearly state and communicate your organization's mission can have harmful consequences, including:

- network members can waste time "barking up the wrong tree"
- the network may not think broadly enough about different possibilities if its mission statement is unclear or overly narrow
- the network may not realize when it is time to go out of business

c. Core Values

Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent a network's highest priorities and deeply held driving forces. (Values are also known as core values and as governing values; they all refer to the same sentiment.)

Value statements are grounded in values and define how people want to behave with each other in the network. These are statements about how the network will value its stakeholders. Value statements describe actions, which are the living enactment of the fundamental values held by most individuals within the network.

The values of each of the individuals in the network, along with their experience, upbringing, and so on, meld together to form the network's culture. The values of senior leaders are especially important in the development of the network's culture. These leaders have a lot of power in the network to set the course and environment and they have selected the staff for the workplace.

If you think about your own life, your values form the cornerstones for all you do and accomplish. They define where you spend your time,

if you are truly living your values. Each of you makes choices in life according to your most important values.

Why Identify and Establish Values?

Effective networks identify and develop a clear, concise and shared meaning of values/beliefs, priorities, and direction so that everyone understands and can contribute. Once defined, values impact every aspect of the network. People will feel fooled and misled unless they see the impact of this within the network. If you want the values you identify to have an impact, the following must occur.

- People demonstrate and model their values in action in their personal work behaviors, decision-making, contribution, and interpersonal interaction.
- Network values help each person establish priorities in their daily work life.
- Values guide every decision that is made once the network has cooperatively created the values and the value statements.
- Rewards and recognition within the network are structured to recognize those people whose work embodies the values the network embraced.
- Network goals are grounded in the identified values. Adoption of the values and the behaviors that result is recognized in regular performance feedback.
- People hire and promote individuals whose outlook and actions are congruent with the values.
- Only the active participation of all members of the network will ensure a truly network-wide, value-based, shared culture.

The following are examples of values: ambition, competency, individuality, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, accuracy, respect, dedication, diversity, improvement, enjoyment/fun, loyalty, credibility, honesty, innovativeness, teamwork, excellence, accountability, empowerment, quality, efficiency, dignity, collaboration, stewardship, empathy, accomplishment, courage, wisdom, independence, security,

challenge, influence, learning, compassion, friendliness, discipline/order, generosity, persistence, optimism, dependability, flexibility etc.

Although important aspects of your life and attention, these are not values: family, religion, professionalism. If you define what you value about each of these, you are identifying the core value. As an example, the core value in family might be close relationships; in religion, spirituality.

Values come alive only when people are involved in doing important tasks. Ideally, an individual's personal values will align with the spoken and unspoken values of the network. By developing a written statement of the values of the network, group members have a chance to contribute to the articulation of these values, as well as to evaluate how well their personal values and motivation match those of the network.

d. Strategies

Strategies are the broadly defined four or five key approaches that the network will use to accomplish its mission and drive toward the vision. Goals and action plans usually flow from each strategy. One example of a strategy is employee empowerment and teams. Another is to pursue a new area of advocacy in Asia.

For e.g. a Human Resources department could devise strategies to develop a superior workforce. These include eliminating poor performers; hiring from several choices of excellent candidates, not just "settling" on a candidate; developing succession planning; and increasing training and cross-training opportunities.

Every aspect of the strategy needs to be interrelated and interlinked at every level – goal, objective and activity levels - with many of the activities contributing to achievement of all of the goals.

e. Goals and Action Plans

After you have developed the key strategies, the network needs to turn its attention to developing several goals that will enable it to accomplish each of your strategies. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

Once the network has enabled the accomplishment of its strategies through setting SMART goals, it will want to develop action plans that will help you accomplish each goal.

Make action plans as detailed as you need them to be and integrate the individual steps into your planning system. An effective planning system, whether it uses a personal computer, a paper and pen system, a handheld computer or a Palm, will keep your goals and action plans on track and on target.

A network's purpose, vision and goals are the magnet for the people, resources and money that are needed to make the network effective. Whether the network is clarifying goals for the first time, or is determining a new focus after years of operation, a strategic plan is critical to success. Good strategic planning involves all the key players in the network, plus possibly people you serve and those you wish to collaborate with. The planning process will include discussion of and decisions on the network's vision and mission, three to five year goals, objectives and strategies for each year that will move the group toward their goals, and a work plan that implements the objectives. The strategic plan, once created, becomes integrated into the network's work and is used regularly (at least quarterly) to assess the network's progress and to adjust as needed.

2. Changing strategies based on current analysis of the socio-econo-politico context and SWOT analysis

Conceptually, all of networking is based on the idea that you must thoroughly know the environment in which you operate in order to do successful advocacy, influence the stakeholders and to plan for the future.

It is important for a network to understand the "big picture" of the environment in which it is operating, and the opportunities and threats that lie within it. By understanding the environment, it can take advantage of the opportunities and minimize the threats.

To help understand the environment you will need to focus on two key areas:

- PEST analysis

- SWOT analysis

A PEST analysis is an analysis of the external macro-environment that affects all networks. P.E.S.T. is an acronym for the Political, Economic, Social, and Technological factors of the external macro-environment. Such external factors usually are beyond the network's control and sometimes present themselves as threats.

We're going to avoid giving an example here, because of the huge potential for causing offense: few societies seem perfect to outsiders, and there are few things as irritating as having an outsider criticize one's own country.

However, a broad principle is that things that make activity more difficult for people or organizations raise the costs: activity is either blocked altogether, or costs more in time/money as difficulties are circumvented. The higher the costs in a region, the more project profitability is squeezed or eliminated. And the lower the amount of activity, the poorer and less capable societies tend to be as a network is unable to function for empowering the people.

Another broad principle is wherever there is rapid or major change in an area, there are likely to be new opportunities and threats that arise. Smart networks will take advantage of the opportunities and manage the threats.

The number of macro-environmental factors is virtually unlimited. In practice, the network must prioritize and monitor those factors that influence it. Even so, it may be difficult to forecast future trends with an acceptable level of accuracy. In this regard, the networks may turn to scenario planning techniques to deal with high levels of uncertainty in important macro-environmental variables.

The use of PEST analysis can identify long lists of factors, which are important at a particular point in time, but it may also help to recognize a smaller number of *interacting* environmental influences.

And do remember that few situations are perfect: it is up to us to make the most of the situation in which we find ourselves.

SWOT analysis is a simple and commonly used tool for strategic analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and

Threats. As a component of the strategy development process, SWOT is a tool for summarizing the outputs of analyses of the network's external environment and audits of its internal resources and capabilities.

Analysis of the external environment evaluates key forces and future dynamics in the macro-environment (including political, economic, social, technological, legal/regulatory and natural environment dimensions). It also examines other stakeholders. Internal analysis reviews the organization's resources (e.g. financial, human, technological, intellectual property) in the context of, and relative to, the external environment. These analyses can be complex. The beauty of SWOT is that it summarizes and simplifies complex situations to show where an organisation should focus its attention.

Strengths and Weaknesses are features of the internal environment. Strengths should focus on those resources or capabilities that give, and will give, the network competitive advantage. Weaknesses are the opposite; they may also include areas where the organisation lacks strength.

Key benefits of SWOT analysis are that it:

- ❑ simplifies complex analyses to define the current position of the network;
- ❑ helps with communication of key elements of strategic analysis to both internal and external audiences;
- ❑ focuses attention on key strategic issues;
- ❑ guides decisions on matching resources and capabilities to the environment in which the network operates.

Thus with these strategic planning tools put in place, a strong, robust foundation shall be developed which shall enable the network to develop programmes that fit with policy and delivery, and which reflect the networks objectives. It also ensures that resources and processes are realistically scheduled, to make sure that programmes stay focused, on time and on budget.

3. Effective and transparent secretariat with good systems and procedures in place

In order to effectively comply with the principles and objectives of the network in a new and changing world, a capable, efficient and transparent Secretariat which operates in a culture of accountability and integrity is needed.

This shall build the people's confidence in the network as well as help it to gear up for any future threats by developing appropriate methodologies. It shall also ensure that decisions are translated into effective actions. The secretariat shall also help in coordinating the formulation of projects included in the annual work program, oversees its implementation, and makes certain that operational strategies and policies are followed.

An effective secretariat is one which:

Focusses on impact and outcomes: It considers the impact that it wants to have and actually has on the people who benefit from it, is clear about its objects, vision, mission and values, and how it will achieve them.

Fit for purpose: The structure, policies and procedures enable it to achieve its mission and aims and deliver its programmes and services efficiently.

Sound governance: It is run by a clearly identifiable trustee body that has the right balance of skills and experience to run the network effectively, acts in the best interests of the network and its beneficiaries, understands its responsibilities and has systems in place to exercise them effectively.

Maximises potential: It manages and uses its resources so as to optimise its potential.

Accountable and transparent: It is accountable to all stakeholders in a way that is transparent and understandable.

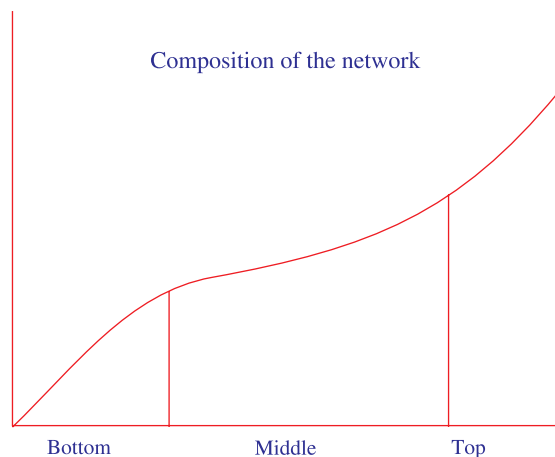
Flexible: It is flexible enough to influence and adapt to changes in the environment in which it works in order to meet the changing needs of those who use its services.

4. Network Governance & division of roles

In a network many different members and organisations are involved, and they come from various cultural areas. They all have specific interests, different modes of communicating and working, diverse histories.

A simple model that demonstrates the types of members is given below:

From the above we can see that there are three layers. In the top there are only a few members (5-10%) often the group that has set up the



network and feels responsible for its fate. The next wave comprises of middle level members (60-70%) who are involved in the network's activities in an operational and more passive way.

The "lurkers" are in the final wave (20-25%) and are not directly involved in the network's activities but rather tend to observe what the network is doing or expecting constant support from the network.

Although it is not acceptable for any member to be a *lurker* it should be accepted that there are different levels of commitment a person has which may be the reason for him / her to be in that slot. A member may be more passive (*lurker*) on account of lack of resources, difficulties in understanding or lack of interest in the current programmes / activities being undertaken by

the network. At a later stage however the same member may get seriously involved and be a vital contributing member. It has also been seen that *lurkers* sometimes serve as important connectors to other networks or organisations.

Those at the top often do not expect support from the network but stay there until the time that they are able to get importance, recognition and respect. They are also a very vital means to generate all kinds of resources including obtaining funds for the network on account of their longstanding and credibility.

Those at the middle rung also expect some support from the network but if they are unable to get some would still stay with the network. However those at the lower rung are there primarily to get support from the network and if they are unable to muster it would leave the network and seek greener pastures elsewhere.

The different levels of involvement in a network, stronger and weaker members, active and passive members, may lead to power struggles among the members. In particular, the secretariat and core group possess more power than all the other members.

One way to reduce the influence and power of some members is to rotate the duties and responsibilities. Nothing is more important to the health and vitality of networks. It may be hard to imagine that a strong, exciting network could ever lose focus, but almost every network is susceptible to burnout at some point during its growth and development. Leaders may become overwhelmed with work or family responsibilities, have health problems, or get tired of doing so much work for so long. No network leader should hold the same leadership position forever.

Many older networks can attest to the problem and even newer networks are susceptible to it. Networks that have been operating for a few years begin to show signs of leadership burnout, such as lagging attendance, lifeless programs, poor communication, or meetings that somehow don't happen.

Therefore rotational leadership needs to be practiced, as networks are not corporate houses but are people led movements and hence all members are leaders. No single individual can be a leader and to show

its deep-rooted attribute of functional democracy, a network must have a change of leadership.

This shall not only prevent members from leaving the network as some may feel that they do not have a chance of ever coming to a position of being a leader in the network but shall also permit that decisions are taken in a more democratic and consensual manner.

From the above graph we can also see that the leadership of the network cannot be taken from the top or the bottom as both either do not have the capacities or the time for the same and hence it could be disastrous.

It has been also seen that if leadership is from the top slot then these members normally depute all work to the secretariat and therefore the secretariat becomes all but powerful and is at the losing end.

If the leadership is taken from the bottom slot then these members since they do not have the ability to guide or lead would depute all the work and processes to the secretariat and therefore the network becomes redundant.

If we choose the leaders democratically then there is the possibility of middle rung members capturing everything because of their sheer numbers and preventing any sort of people coming from any of the other two areas leading to a total bankruptcy of the ideals of the network from emanating. So what the network needs is to select or elect some members from all the various groups to promote collective leadership principles. In such a situation all can be groomed and taught to take on the responsibilities.

The governing of the network too has to be done by a professionally strategic board, not by an ornamental board but by a strategic board, which is democratically elected from all the three categories, thus it shall be resourceful and possess the necessary expertise.

5. Less dependence on donors with local resource mobilization – strategies for resource mobilization

Worldwide, international donors and foundations regularly shift their geographical and sectoral interests based on many factors, including

their assessments of the socio-economic situation of a country and the donor's own changing strategic interests and priorities.

Combined with overall decreasing levels of international assistance and a burgeoning civil sector competing for these limited resources, social entrepreneurs (entrepreneurs who pioneer innovative solutions to social problems, sharing the unique entrepreneurial quality of pursuing their vision relentlessly until it becomes a reality society-wide) and civil society activists worldwide are facing real funding challenges.

Networking is a process and networks have to be procedural in nature. Many a times, due to lack of resources, networks take up a particular project for which funds are available for its sustenance and remain as implementers of that project; thereby becoming similar to any other organization. Due to lack of resources, it fails to maintain its procedural nature. Therefore there is a need to look for alternative funding sources, as very few existing funders are willing to give funds to networks and networking. And even if some funds are available, the possibilities of being a funder-driven project cannot be ruled out.

So for a network to survive, to be free from financial uncertainties, it is essential for networks to look for alternative fund raising methodologies.

Good networks are those that are not dependent on donors but rather have members who contribute to the core fund for programme execution. If the network is dependent on let us say the government then it cannot challenge it on any grounds and if it is dependent on let us say the European Union (EU) then too it cannot take a stand on the issue of the WTO Fair Trade against the EU.

Thus networks need to take up measures as per ground realities and situations, which would help in its sustainability and, within that, financial sustainability. There are numerous benefits to achieving greater sustainability. For example, the network can expect to see:

- Increased financial consistency and security-they will be able to plan a three-year program and know that the necessary resources are in place;
- Increased accountability to the community(ies) served – they will be able to deliver on promises made;

- Increased public involvement in, and support of, the work of the organization, and;
- Increased autonomy from external funders – they can develop a plan of action based on local priorities and implement it with funds generated for that purpose. This enables networks to avoid the trap of chasing money based on a donor's sense of priorities.

6. Mechanism to cope with retaliation and pressure from the government and local vested interests

Civil society structures have only developed since the establishment of democracy. Since then, the building of civil society has followed both the strategies of 'involvement of' and 'confrontation with' the State. Both the strategies flow from the provisions, which envisions a plural, equal and liberal society in which civil society organisations will have a crucial role to play.

The Constitution engages both the State and civil society in social, economic and political processes. But in practice, the State has often chosen to act on its own, sometimes even undermining the constitutional spirit thus inviting the confrontational role of civil society. Civil society has repeatedly needed to mobilize to protest in order to force the elected parliamentary representatives to enact laws in the interests of the people and to get existing laws meaningfully implemented.

The Constitution in theory provides an enabling environment, but in practice, State policies and programmes have not been that encouraging. The relationship between state bodies and civil society organisations has gradually deteriorated as democratic space has decreased.

Civil society organizations are coming under increasing pressure from the government, to the point where they are sometimes forced to curtail their activities in order to avoid being shut down entirely. At other times, the State has viewed civil society organisations with increasing suspicion and seek to co-opt them to their cause, or force their compliance.

At the grassroots level, NGO staff also are trying to implement development programmes in an environment characterized by violence, insecurity, and human rights abuses. In many parts of the country, the infrastruc-

ture of the state is confined to district headquarters, and communities are not able to access government services.

This is also coupled with the erosion of democracy and the dissolution of power structures at the grassroots level, and together these lead to a decreased ability of villagers to maintain the development space. There is also a disengagement of the state from service provision, from the provision of democracy, institutions etc.

Also some governments have taken up a surprising strategy. They establish an artificial "civil society," indirectly financed by the government (quasi-NGOs or "Quangos" and GONGO's or "Government organized NGOs). The structure of this artificial civil sector is also a legacy of the past, rather than the reflection of current social needs. Most Quangos are active in the fields of education (private schools), social care (residential homes or service centres for handicapped or aged persons) and culture (museums, libraries, galleries, theatres, cinemas, etc.). In other words, the state traditionally supports activities that do not present political threat or challenge. Loyal persons and groups can also be rewarded through this paternalistic system. After some time, the state-created "civil society" threatens to overshadow and overtake the authentic civil society.

At the local level we see that power structures are such that they are always controlled by the upper / high castes and they dominate all levels of society in the concerned area.

For e.g. if a person is a politician then his family members / relatives will be occupants of key positions in the police, bureaucracy, teaching establishments etc.

When networks organize people against any of these people or their vested interests we see that all their kith and kin come out in retaliation either directly or indirectly. On soft core issues such as education for all we see that the reprisal mechanism is not that very severe but when it comes to hard issues such as empowerment of women or human rights violation we see the act of vengeance almost immediately.

Thus we see that, networks should definitely be reckoned as a cure for taming these pressures, notwithstanding difficulties the development

process brings. Various actors comprising civil society – citizen groups, NGOs, trade unions, think tanks, academia, religious associations and of course media – can all play an important role in curbing these anti actions. If a network is having good rapport with such bodies they can resist such situations. In a bid to succeed it is important for networks to work at advancing their own structures and sharpening their own skills. The powerful global potential of a civil society must be empowered by raising public concern and support to become effective.

Case No. 4: AVARD

In some ways in India, the difficulties in the relationship between the State and the voluntary sector began soon after independence, with some of Gandhiji's followers opting for politics and power and others for voluntary constructive work.

The differences in social vision and approaches to growing disparities became a cause for increasing the hiatus between the voluntary sector workers such as JP and political leaders, particularly Indira Gandhi.

In 1973, the Nava Nirman ("new construction") movement spearheaded by student activists in Gujarat led to the fall of a corrupt state government. In 1974, Jai Prakash Narayan, started a political movement for "total revolution", which led to the imposition of "emergency" in mid-1975.

There was a complete reversal in 1977, however, when the first Janata government came to power after Indira Gandhi's defeat. But after her party came to power in 1980, one of Indira Gandhi's first acts was to set up the infamous Kudal Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of certain Gandhian organisations including AVARD because JP was the President of AVARD at that time and AVARD used to publish his fiery speeches.

This Commission started enquiring into hundreds of Gandhian organisations including AVARD and its tax benefits and permission to receive foreign funds were withdrawn more out of political vendetta, than any matter of great substance.

With such harsh rules in place, the government was able to prohibit the flow of funds to AVARD. As AVARD was heavily dependent on the flow of money from the outside, the government

used one pretext or another to prevent the flow of funds to AVARD. This led to their programmes and projects being put on hold and slowly and steadily an exodus of their staff on account of no salaries.

Thus AVARD being a very large association collapsed under the weight of no funding support. What has happened since then till date is another issue but AVARD has not risen from its ashes to become a strong association.

Lessons Learnt

- * Networks / Associations / NGOs should not keep political leaders on their board.
- * Networks / Associations should have coping mechanism for such attacks by the state
- * Networks / Associations should have alternate funding mechanism and should not be dependent entirely on foreign funding

If we take the case of VANI it had a great coping mechanism as its members were closely aligned to it and expressed their complete support at the time of crisis, thus when the state struck down it was able to manage all eventualities and emerge victorious. ■

6

C H A P T E R

Networks: People Centered Advocacy

Networks: People Centered Advocacy

"We have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and non violent pressure ... Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

– Martin Luther King, 1963

Public policy is a function of the dominant politics. Politics is a dominant set of power relationships, so there is a need to understand the link between public policies and political process on the one hand; and political process and power relationship within the society on the other hand.

An issue needs to be framed the way people feel and perceive it. An issue is a social, economic or political concern or phenomenon, which affects a large number of people over a long period of time. It needs to be understood in terms of power relationships within the society, politics of the state and the policy priorities.

One of the key problems in most of the countries in the Global south is the increasing gap between policy rhetoric and real implementation. Radical sounding language is increasingly used to gloss over deprivation, injustice and inequality. Through the co-option of language, symbols and institutions that claim to represent civil society and the marginalized, decision makers tend to create more and more policy mirage. Policy mirage is a public policy statement, which articulates a lofty vision and principles for change, without any clear programme to move toward that vision and without any budgetary allocation to implement the policy. Such policy mirages create illusions of change while perpetuating the status quo. Hence, there is a need to understand

and change a public policy in terms of policy direction, relevant legislation, accompanying programme, implementing mechanisms and most importantly financial allocation.

Advocacy means amplifying the voice for a positive change. But the fundamental question facing activists is whose voice and for what purpose. Across the world large numbers of people are marginalized and unheard in the corridors of power and advocacy is the process of using information strategically to change policies that affect the lives of these disadvantaged people. It often involves lobbying northern development and political institutions. Increasingly southern NGOs are developing advocacy skills to challenge local, national and international policies.

This involves strengthening the structures through which poor people can participate in the formulation of the policies that control their lives, for example developing strong local networks and representation on local and national civic institutions. Projects, which involve the people affected by policy change in developing, implementing and monitoring advocacy work are more likely to achieve concrete change on the ground.

Advocacy in the North & the South

The northern concept of advocacy is technically lobbying whereby the organizations / institutions make specific attempts to influence legislation. In this case the organisations do not rely on mass mobilization or take into account all stakeholders but rather contact government officials or employees directly to influence legislation. If an issue is to be decided through a ballot initiative or referendum, only then an appeal is made to the public.

However in case of the south participative advocacy (sometimes known as southern advocacy or stakeholder advocacy) is practiced which is a process in which people articulate their own needs and desires, gain the confidence and ability to influence decisions, which will affect their own future. NGO and its network act as facilitators / catalysts.

Case No. 5: GCAP

Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) was initiated as an international loose alliance of organizations, networks and national campaigns to pressure world leaders to act on poverty and hold them accountable for commitments they have made regarding debt, trade and aid.

While it is impossible to measure the impact of GCAP directly on international fora, there were some notable achievements. Interviewees concurred that GCAP greatest success was White Band Days to mobilise millions of people all over the world in a short time, building alliances with various kinds of organisations and involving illustrious personalities from different fields such as politics, sports, music, movies etc. Such kind of a mobilization has never been seen earlier on because the issues identified were very clear and focused. The media too chipped in, in a significant way which has been unparalleled earlier on.

Lessons Learnt

- * If vision, mission and strategies are clear then results can be seen in a short time too
- * People of all stratas of society are willing to do their bit provided there is a platform to do so
- * Networks / Alliances should have the right focus to align the masses

Participation is a complicated process, which has revolutionized development work. At its core lies an idea that the power relationships between North and South need to be challenged, and that those whose lives are most directly affected will define the best solutions to poverty and inequality.

Characteristics of People-centered Advocacy

People-centered advocacy is a set of organized actions aimed at influencing public policies, societal attitudes and socio-political processes that enable and empower the marginalized to speak for themselves. Its purpose is social transformation through the realization of human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

People-centered advocacy is
by the people,
of the people and
for the people.

Hence, it is the spirit of democracy that drives the very idea of people-centered advocacy.

A ‘people-centered’ approach acknowledges the critical role of citizens. However, it seeks to go beyond the framework of a “State-Citizen” axis to the arena of the people that include both citizens as well as disenfranchised people not recognized by the state as citizens. That is why the term people-centered, instead of citizen-centered is preferred.

As Mikhail Bakunin pointed out, “No state, however democratic...is capable of giving the people what they need: the free organization of their own interest from below upward, without any interference, tutelage or coercion from above. Because no state.....in essence represents anything but government...by an educated, and thereby privileged minority which supposedly understand the real interest of the people better than people themselves.” [Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (1873), translated and edited by Marshel S. Shatz (Cambridge University Press, 1990). Page 24.] Hence, people-centered advocacy is about mobilizing the politics of the people to ensure that the politics of the state is accountable, transparent, ethical and democratic. It is a mode of social and political action.

a. Ethical Choices

In people-centered advocacy “being” is as important as “becoming.”

- ❑ Unless one believes in a cause, one cannot advocate for that particular cause. Integrity and legitimacy of advocates are what provide moral force to advocacy. Hence, it seeks to bridge the gap between the words and the deeds; theory and practice; rhetoric and real life experience. It stresses that unless you challenge and change yourself, you cannot change others.
- ❑ People-centered advocacy stresses the compatibility of means and

ends. Unjust means can never be used for a just end. In this sense, people-centered advocacy seeks to change unjust power relations through non-violent direct action.

b. Rights Based Approach:

People-centered advocacy encompasses a rights-based approach to social change and transformation.

- ❑ People are not passive beneficiaries or charity seekers of the state or government. The state’s political and moral responsibility is to guarantee all human rights to all human beings; particularly the right to live with dignity. Hence people have a right to demand that the state ensure equitable social change and distributive justice.
- ❑ Citizens are the owners of the state. Hence, the state should be transparent and accountable to citizens and defend human rights. In people-centered advocacy initiatives, networks mobilize people and civil society against societal violations of human rights.
- ❑ It seeks to bridge the gap between micro-level activism and macro-level policy change. It stresses a bottoms-up approach to social change rather than a top-down approach through macro-level policy change. It seeks to strengthen people’s participation in the process of policy making and implementation.

c. Political Perspective

- ❑ People-centered advocacy seeks to go beyond the idea of advocating on behalf of the marginalized to the practice of enabling and empowering the marginalized to speak for themselves.
- ❑ A value-driven process, it works to challenge and change unjust and unequal power relations, e.g. patriarchy at every level of society; from private to public, from family to governance. Values of social justice and human rights are at its core.
- ❑ It seeks to go beyond a state-centered approach to social change and politics to one shaped and led by the people. Grounded in the right to democratic dissent, it also includes the responsibility to work for just and viable political and policy alternatives.

d. Integrating Principles

The three integrating principles of people-centered approaches are participation, communication and legitimacy. They integrate its politics and ethics as well as the various arenas of advocacy.

Participation: Participation is not a mere strategy to manufacture consent, manipulate consensus or extract cheap labour. Participation is a principle based on an inclusive moral choice; participation means sharing power, legitimacy, freedom, responsibilities and accountability. Participation is both a principle and means to include as many people as possible in the process of social change. Built on a deep respect for plurality, tolerance and dissent, it also involves an ability to understand and appreciate differences. Transparency is a pre-requisite for true participation. In people-centered advocacy, participation is a crucial means to initiate, inform and inspire change in all arenas of advocacy. A deep sense of participation and communication help promote solidarity. Strong social movements sprout from a cause and identity common to large numbers of people sharing a vision and passion for change.

Communication: Advocacy is a communicative act and a set of actions that involves communications designed to promote social action. Community, collectivism and communication are closely interwoven. The process of advocacy involves different elements. These include: Communicate to Convince; Convince to Change; Change to Commit and Commit to Convert to the cause. Communication is not merely the use of language. It is an attitude—a willingness to share; to learn; to reach out; and to speak. The clarity of the message is as important as the choice of medium. An effective communication strategy involves the creative use of symbols, language, information, knowledge, poetry, prose and politics. The commitment of the communicator is as important as the message. Such a process involves learning from people, sharing with them, and inspiring and being inspired by them. Advocacy communication needs to be consistent, continuous, creative, compelling and convincing.

Legitimacy: Legitimacy is not merely about legality; it is both about ethics and politics. Legitimacy is not something one assumes, but

something one acquires. Connected to the perception of power, legitimacy is derived over a period of time through a series of actions. It is the sense of deep commitment, accountability, communicability and action that help to derive legitimacy. It is both relative and dynamic and fosters credibility. Each arena of advocacy demands a particular type of legitimacy.

Arenas of People-Centered Advocacy

Defining the arenas of people-centered advocacy helps clarify the roles and strategies of different set of actors in bringing about social change. There are four arenas in people-centered advocacy — a) People b) Public c) Networks /Institutions and d) Decision-makers — that are linked to each other and overlap at certain points.

(a) People: Key to the process is the arena of people: (i) those who are directly affected or going to be affected by an issue (ii) those with whom an organization or movement is directly working and (iii) those who identify with a particular cause or issue.

Advocacy work in this arena involves educating people on an issue, mobilizing people around an issue, and organizing a particular group or community for long-term social transformation.

Mobilization is a continuous process of interaction, learning, critical awareness and collective action. It needs to educate, enable and empower the people. Such a process needs a clear political perspective and a long-term strategy for communication and participation.

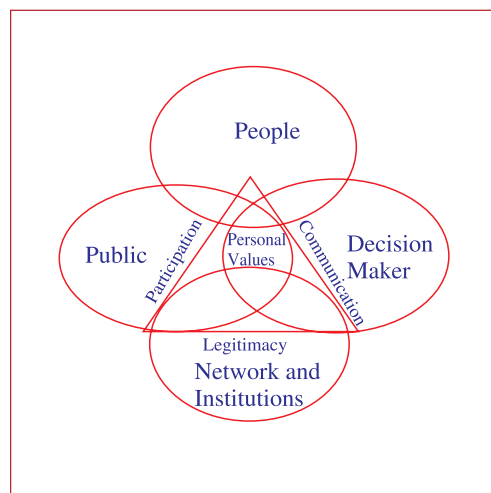
(b) Public: Public is one of the most used yet least understood terms. People-centered advocacy defines the public principally as the middle class, opinion makers, intellectuals and media. Whether as perpetrators or challengers of the status quo, they play a substantial role in shaping the political agenda and have the means to amplify the voice of the voiceless. To be effective advocacy needs to tap a critical mass of the public.

Media Advocacy is the strategic use of communication and mass media to bring an issue into the public arena and the political discourse. It has two aspects: 1) creating news through building collective action and 2) articulating views through the media

Knowledge - based activism is an important factor that influences the public. In the information age, it is not only the emotional appeal of an issue that matters, but the overall rationale based on a knowledge-based argument that makes a decisive impact.

(c) Networks and Institutions: The arena of networks and institutions is important for sharing resources, co-coordinating multiple strategies and involving a large number of actors in advocacy. Networking widens the outreach and helps to build up a multiplier effect in terms of impact and public discourse. Advocacy seeks to integrate power of knowledge and the power of networking. Advocacy is also a process of negotiating with various institutions, including institutions of governance. Such a process requires long-term commitment and optimal institutional and financial resources. Networking is an important means to synergise the strengths of both institutions and individuals that identify with the advocacy cause. Clarity of goals, compatibility of perspective and convergence of interest are crucial for any sustainable networking. It seeks to bridge the gap between micro-level activism and macro-level policy initiative, developing multiple voices and diverse efforts in favor of the advocacy cause.

(d) Decision-Makers: The decision-makers are those who have authority to make decisions and influence power relationship. This includes not only state policies, but also those who have the power to make decision in socio-cultural institutions, corporations, religious institutions, etc. There are multiple arenas of power and institutions that influence public policies and social attitudes. For instance, many of the religious



institutions and practices perpetuate discrimination on the basis of gender and cast.

Advocacy is a strategic process of convincing those in the corridors of power to make decisions or to exert their influence in favor of an advocacy cause. It is a rational process of making a convincing argument, using information and knowledge. However, the real bargaining power of an advocate comes from people, the public as well as the process of networking. People-centered perspectives insists that social advocates should be grounded in real life experience and have an organic relationship with grassroots movements and the credibility and legitimacy that comes from that relationship.

Personal values of all individuals occupy the central position of all these domains in people centered advocacy. Personal values means 'individuals own conviction and belief, which drive them and make their work effective'.

If social advocates are not convinced and if they do not believe in what they are advocating for it, it is very difficult to convince others. Thus personal value is the driving force to change society.

We can also see that in the entire gamut of people centered advocacy all members of the arena must be united in the area of values that they easily identify with as only then shall massive interest groups and a huge base of support be achieved in order to influence macro level processes, structures and ideologies or target the technical and regional levels of institutions to influence specific policies, programmes or projects.

Who are the stakeholders?

Stakeholders in advocacy work are those individuals who have an interest in seeing the goals of the advocacy work being reached, or not. It is useful to break this large group down into smaller categories of like-minded people in order to recognize where participants fit into the campaign.

a. Allies

People who are 'on your side' either because they will benefit directly

from the changes you are trying to bring about, or because they want to help you bring about these changes as part of a broader movement.

b. Beneficiaries

People whose lives will be improved by the successful achievement of your advocacy goals. Individuals in this group could also be called ‘allies’ because they have a vested interest in seeing the end result but a beneficiary is often a more passive stakeholder than an ally.

c. Adversaries

People who are opposed to what you’re trying to do. These people could become allies in time, with greater understanding of the issues, or could be standing in the way of what you’re trying to do. Adversaries can become targets of your advocacy project if you are planning a series of activities to ‘win them around’.

d. Internal stakeholders

A grouping used to define people within your own organization or network or alliance who are actively collaborating on the design, management and execution of your plan of action. They may not necessarily all be allies because some of them may be skeptical about doing any sort of advocacy work at all, and reluctant to lend their time to it. Individuals in this group are usually people with whom you have regular contact and need to be moved between the boxes, i.e. turning adversaries into tools, allies into tools and tools into participants. People can be in more than one of these categories at any one time.

Designing a people centered advocacy strategy

There is no ‘right’ way to design a people centered advocacy strategy. In this chapter, a number of key tools for structuring your thinking about priorities and actions are presented, and these can be used in such campaigns. But the order in which a campaign uses these tools will vary. For instance, a very participative campaign might not place ‘participant analysis’ in one box; the principle might feed into all areas of work. Also, the lessons learned as you go through these processes will feedback new information. The process of developing an advocacy strategy is therefore a circular one involving constantly

revisiting assumptions and decisions made earlier in the process.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and design actions that shape and guide an advocacy effort. Engaging in strategic planning allows networks to determine if the desired public policy goals are reasonably obtainable, and which advocacy tools should be used in what form of an advocacy campaign. The extent to which networks use strategic planning is an indication of the level of the group’s organizational development.

A strategy is an overall map that guides the use of specific actions or tactics towards clearly defined and obtainable goals. Strategic planning involves a hard-nosed assessment of where networks are, where they want to go, and how to get there. Strategic planning is essential in order to conduct evaluations. Without knowing where a network is to begin, it is difficult to assess progress.

This section will describe strategic planning, discuss its importance, introduce a strategic planning model, discuss the importance and the effectiveness of using a combination of advocacy tools, and introduce a model for measuring the progress of organizational development for advocacy networks.

The Importance of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning creates a set of concrete objectives, the implementation plan for achieving those objectives, and a means to assess the progress made towards those objectives during the course of an advocacy campaign. Like travelers on a journey, a carefully strategized planning before an advocacy campaign is launched will create a road map that will guide the advocate towards the ultimate destination. Encouraging network leaders to consistently use strategy planning with the values, which they hold will facilitate the process.

A Strategic Planning Model

There are many models that can be used for strategic planning. One such model, developed from the experience of social advocates and advocacy organizations in designing and conducting training and

workshops, is presented below. Advocacy organizations should not be limited to this model, as it represents only a fraction of the existing strategic planning models.

The 11-Questions for a Strategic Planning Model

Questions #1-6 refer to the external environment

1. *Political climate:* Is the political environment such that advocacy organization and/or the issue the organization seeks to address has a reasonable opportunity to succeed in the advocacy campaign?
2. *Public policy objectives and goals:* What is the problem? What does the network want? What are the risks of an unfavorable outcome from the advocacy campaign?
3. *Key players:* Who can make it happen? Who can prevent it from happening? Who within and outside government will support or oppose the network?
4. *Message:* What do the key players need to hear? Are there different messages for different audiences?
5. *Messenger:* Whom do the key players need to hear the message from?
6. *Delivery:* How should the network deliver the message?

Questions #7-11 refer to the internal environment

7. *Organizational resources:* What capacity or resources does the network possess to carry out the various tasks in the campaign? What does the network have to build upon?
8. *Gaps, challenges:* What does the network need to develop? Do the network's potential allies possess these capacities? And how those gaps or challenges can be bridged through an alliance with potential allies?
9. *Sequence of steps:* How does the network begin? What is the proper sequence for launching the various components of the campaign?
10. *Evaluation:* How does the network know the campaign is working and moving in the right direction? How does the network make adjustments?

11. *Mechanism to cope with retaliation:* What measures does the network use to contend with retribution through any stakeholder?

Using the model as a guide to strategic planning:

1. *Political climate:* Is the political environment such that advocacy organization and/or the issue the network seeks to address has a reasonable opportunity to succeed in the advocacy campaign?

Any effective advocacy campaign must first assess whether or not the political environment in which it will be conducted is reasonably receptive to both the advocacy organization and the issue. A campaign for constitutional reforms for e.g. may not be viable in a particular political environment, which is not conducive to accept ideas for change, whereas a campaign to protect environmentally sensitive regions may be if the priority is on meeting environment goals and if not much of resources are required.

The political assessment will also guide the decisions made throughout the strategic plan. Decisions about how issues are framed, the institutions and decision makers to be targeted, the message and messengers to be used, and the coalition to be formed are all informed by the assessment of the political environment.

Case No. 6: ADAB

Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the state has largely failed to assist the poor or reduce poverty, while NGOs have grown dramatically, ostensibly to fill this gap. There are more and bigger NGOs here than in any other part of the world. The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) was the most effective network and had the power to influence government policies. ADAB being the largest broad-based network in Bangladesh was able to influence policy-making and decisions in a great way.

Thus when there was a movement for the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh ADAB alongwith others was able to mobilize nearly 10 lakh people successfully. The ruling party was not at all happy with this development, in fact no government world wide would want a strong civil society movement to exist in their country. Seeing this awesome might of mobilization and

strength and popularity among the plebeians, the then main opposition parties offered some parliamentary seats to NGO leaders to contest upon during elections. The ruling party while seeing such a move and in order to counteract offered also equivalent seats to other NGO leaders.

During the Parliamentary elections, some ADAB members who belonged to either of the parties in order to garner a support base to win the election resorted to mud-slinging activities and washed each other's dirty linen in public.

After the elections were over the then ruling party who was waiting for such an opportune moment to divide the sector and weaken it used such allegations and spearheaded a campaign to verify the situation and a number of cases were filed against them in court. Some of the senior level activists were put behind bars. Members of ADAB also got divided on political lines and finally a vertical division took place in ADAB.

Thus ADAB being a very large Association collapsed under the weight of no funding support. What has happened since then till date is another issue but ADAB has not risen from its ashes.

Lessons Learnt

* Network / Federation / NGOs should never directly participate in electoral politics but always as a principle influence policies from the outside.

* ADAB despite its inherent strengths was unable to see the hidden agenda and nefarious designs of the political parties to weaken the sector.

* ADAB's leaders developed a political image and therefore were unable to get any support from the people at large

2. **Public policy objectives and goals:** What is the problem? What solution does the network seek? What are the risks of an unfavorable outcome from the advocacy campaign?

In every advocacy campaign it is necessary to clearly define the problem and the desired policy objective.

Is the local water supply unhealthy and the local community wants access to safe drinking water? Is the central government suppressing

the free exchange of information and non-government groups want to publish free of censorship?

Once the problem and the possible solution(s) have been clearly identified, consideration must be given to the potential risks of the advocacy campaign. By raising an issue and advocating for a public policy solution, the issue is in play and there is always a risk that the resolution is not the one sought. For instance, by asking that a sensitive environmental preserve be expanded in size, there is a risk that those who seek to economically exploit its resources will exploit this debate to argue that the preserve is already too large and should be reduced.

Advocates cannot always control the course of the debate, so the risk of a bad outcome may outweigh the likelihood of the resolution being sought. This risk must be honestly and carefully weighed before launching the campaign.

3. **Key players:** Who in government can make it happen? Who in government can prevent it from happening? Who outside government will support you or oppose you?

It is essential to identify those institutions of government and/or those individuals in government who are in a position to enact or block the desired policy outcome. The solution may lie with a legislator or an administrative body that enacts regulations or enforces standards, with the courts to force the executive branch to act according to law, or with the passage of a statute. It is often necessary or advisable to pursue policy solutions in more than one forum. But in every case one must clearly examine any and all possible forums available to enact or block the public policy position you seek to effect.

Once the appropriate public policy institutions are identified one must then identify the key personnel in each institution who can influence the outcome. It may be a key legislator, minister, bureaucrat, or party president. The challenge is to identify the key personnel in the decision-making process, both those who will support and those who will oppose the position.

Similarly, identifying those interests and organizations outside government that may be allies and those that are likely to oppose the advocacy effort is essential in the strategic planning. Mapping support

and opposition, both inside and outside government, will allow the advocacy campaign to rally support and blunt opposition.

- 4. *Message:*** What do the key players need to hear? Are there different messages for different audiences?

Once the issue has been identified, the desired outcome determined, and the institutions and players capable of providing the desired outcome identified, the messages needed to persuade the relevant actors must be developed.

The message may be different for different institutions or individuals. For instance, if the advocacy campaign includes both litigation and administrative advocacy, the messages directed to the courts and the appropriate executive branch agency may be much different, in the first instance focused on a strictly legal argument, in the latter on urging the advocacy organization's policy choices over other permissible choices. As will be discussed in more detail in a later section, different, or differently packaged messages, may be used to influence public opinion.

- 5. *Messenger:*** Whom do the key players need to hear the message from?

The most effective messenger for each audience must be carefully chosen. A skilled lawyer for litigation may not be the most effective spokesperson before a legislative committee considering the issue. Choice of the messenger can be as critical as the content of the message itself.

- 6. *Delivery:*** How should the network deliver the message?

The medium through which the message is delivered will vary depending on the issue and the message. Often, the advocacy campaign will include the use of multiple media to ensure that the messages are effectively and widely disseminated to the target audiences.

- 7. *Organizational resources:*** What capacity does the network possess to carry out the various tasks in the campaign? What does the network have to build upon?

An inventory of institutional capacity to carry out the tasks outlined above will help the organization determine what can be done with current resources. The advocacy organization may have a very

effective radio and television communicator on staff that can organize and implement that part of the campaign. Similarly, the organization may have internal resources to conduct litigation, lobby the legislature, etc. An inventory of resources will not only identify an organization's gifts but also reveal any shortcomings, gaps or challenges.

- 8. *Gaps, challenges:*** What resources and skills does the network need to develop? Do the network's potential allies possess these capacities?

After identifying gifts and resources, the organization must frankly and honestly assess any shortcomings that must be addressed and overcome. For instance, the desired policy outcome and the forum in which it must be achieved may require access to expertise that the organization does not itself possess. Acquiring the expertise, by partnering with a like-minded organization that possesses it or by hiring someone who has it, is a necessary step in designing an advocacy campaign.

- 9. *Sequence of steps:*** How does the campaign begin? What is the proper sequence for launching the various components of the campaign?

The timing of a campaign and the sequence in which the various components of a campaign are implemented can be decisive in achieving the desired outcome. A carefully considered timeline is a necessary component in any advocacy effort.

- 10. *Evaluation:*** How does the network know the advocacy campaign is working? How does the network make adjustments during the course of the campaign?

Honest, periodic, self-assessment of an advocacy campaign will allow the network to assess progress toward the ultimate goal.

The evaluation should review the effectiveness of each element in the plan and whether or not adjustments are needed in the strategy. Constantly reexamining the assumptions and the external factors that underlie and influence the effectiveness of the plan, in addition to assessing implementation, are essential steps in a successful campaign.

11. Mechanism to cope with retaliation: Networks do face problems in implementing development activities in their working areas due to various conflicts, and currently they are living through times of extraordinary challenging circumstances: escalating national conflict, massive human rights abuses, increasing number of internally displaced people, civil society organisations working under increasing pressure and vulnerable to extortion and threats.

When networks take on the factors / forces behind these, they would definitely get targeted and could if situations get out of control land in difficult / tight situations, which could even hamper their work / output completely.

In order to do so they need to:

- Review relevant documents
- Have in-depth talks with government officials, executive chiefs of partner organisations, development workers and with key informants and others from partnership programmes
- They need to work upon Participatory Rapid Assessment with project management team, support staff and executive members based upon field observations to determine appropriate course of action.

Thus with the appropriate techniques and tools in hand, networks shall be able to build pressures for change or seek alternative methods for continuing their campaigns despite the retaliation being offered.

Case No. 7: VANI

On 25 September 1999, two Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) officials - in separate statements on the same day - called for the investigation and punishment of 13 Women Organisations for their sponsorship of a newspaper advertisement criticizing the party's positions on women's issues. The advertisement was entitled "They do not respect women" without mentioning the name of any political party but examples were targeted to the BJP. The party officials assailed these organisations as "anti-national and anti-Indian".

When the media took up the issue and confronted some of the top BJP leaders, they stated that they were anti-national as they were

opposed to the Pokhran nuclear tests of May 1998.

The very next day almost all newspapers carried out this story prominently. VANI came out in support of these women's organizations and openly questioning these leaders, with the logic that in a democracy every citizen or organisation has the right to refuse to go along with the government and with those who are not ready to accept such principles, the country is not safe in their hands. At this juncture the BJP was in power.

Within days of these statements, the Home Ministry dutifully served a show cause notice to all the 13 NGOs including VANI presumptively classifying the groups as "organisation[s] of a political nature, not being a political party" under Section 5(1) of the FCRA. If unable to rebut this classification, these NGOs would be required to obtain prior permission from the Home Ministry before receiving any foreign contributions.

VANI immediately informed hundreds of organizations about these developments. A series of meetings by different organisations were organized and a statement in support of VANI and criticizing the government action was issued by even trade unions, human rights organisations and smaller political parties. The media too wrote editorials on this issue.

The Show Cause Notice served upon all these NGOs alleged that these voluntary associations "have been associated with the release of certain advertisements in the press and with certain documents the contents of which are in the nature of comments of a political nature."

All NGOs including VANI sent a reply to the show cause notice and challenged the government to take action against them but the government could not do so on account of increasing public pressure.

Lessons Learnt

- * VANI has a very strong and robust membership and all of them stood resiliently at the time of crisis.
- * VANI had good amicable relationships with even those who are not members such as trade unions, HR organisations, political parties therefore support was garnered almost instantaneously without any reservation.
- * VANI had an apolitical and independent image and therefore it was able to get huge support of the people at large

Who defines success in people centered advocacy?

Different stakeholders will have different views on what success is, depending on where they are within the impact chain. To get an overview of how successful you were you need to solicit the views of a range of stakeholders, such as the ultimate beneficiaries, local people and their organisations, staff involved, target audience, journalists and outsiders.

People-centered advocacy always considers every aspect of policy, process and negotiation in terms of the real impact it can bring to the lives of the poorest. Every action needs to be inspired and informed by Mahatma Gandhi's talisman:

"I will give you a talisman... Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away." ■

C H A P T E R

7

Conclusion

Conclusion

Networking and creation of formal networks is common all around the world. The concept of networking is closely related to social movements based on the principles of democracy, participation and decentralization - the belief that problems can be solved through compromise and cooperation rather than confrontation. Networks are therefore not only a manifestation of the will of a social movement and of civil society. They also express new forms of relations between civil society and the state.

Networks are potentially powerful mechanisms for strengthening people's participation in the development process. Their growth can be supported by existing organisations who are clearly committed to spawning new and potentially autonomous networks. In practice, existing organisations require a clear strategy built from having reviewed, debated and considered options at each stage of the networking process.

Implicit in this process is the assumption that community networks serve as a bridge, or a vehicle whereby people can, through organized efforts, participate in influencing, shaping and transforming the development process in their favour. In this respect we can leave aside the role of merely organising people's contributions to maintain existing institutions, systems or projects, or of merely functioning in a way that is more sensitive to people's views.

Networks must be more than a mere instrument of system maintenance or project implementation. If networks are to genuinely promote people's participation in governance, they must recognize their role as being to essentially create the conditions whereby people

can begin to get involved and have influence and ownership of activities before they begin and ultimately bring about social change. This is the key aspect of their role; if it is undertaken in any other way the network will end up basically trying to accommodate people within existing institutions, structures and systems.

- ❑ Networks are a growing process: Networking as a conscious form of organizing has emerged for many reasons, both pragmatic and value-based. The pragmatic considerations have been a recognition the global problems of today have to counter, also on a global scale and that networking improves the effect, visibility and efficiency of the people involved in advancing a cause.
- ❑ Networks are a very effective tool / strategy for advocacy: Networks are also powerful instruments for working for social change. Their strength lies in their exceptional ability to enhance and deepen critical thinking and creativity through dialogue and exchange; to address global problems by joining forces to take global action; to transcend isolation and strengthen local action; to link local organizing efforts and structures to international ones, to facilitate participation; and to be flexible and respond quickly to new and changing situation.
- ❑ Networks are not replicable : An existing network is one piece of a jigsaw puzzle, a piece that has found its place within the wider framework of reshaping society. The network would not have emerged as it did without the contextual factors that shaped it. From this perspective, a network arguably cannot be replicated or designed. But there are certain design elements that can be observed in the context of change processes. Clearly, the more ownership there is of a process, the larger the probability that these elements will be brought to bear. In other words, the more external push and pull, the less likely sustainability and success will be.
- ❑ Networks also reflect a certain value-base: Networks are based on a belief that the coming together and the sharing of experience, knowledge and information, is by itself useful. Networks tend to avoid the tradition pyramidal structures that do not allow expression of those who are “lower” down; and therefore strive to be inclusive and bring people together for common causes while

respecting diversity.

Networks also imply a reciprocity, which ‘aid’ does not. It is a coming together of allies; of achieving ‘social synergy’

- ❑ Networks are a method and process that will allow space for evolution, for accommodating difference, the converging and dispersing, for engaging in dialogue and collective decision-making. Platforms are built on issues that cut across differences and on viewpoints or quests that seem to echo widespread anxiety or an inspiration.

The space for the voices of the oppressed once occupied by the left and the unions, then is available, unfilled - and in the last decade or two is being filled by peoples movements all over the world - North and South. But people’s movements by definition do not have the institutional structure that political parties and Trade Unions have. They do not have a space in the States institutional framework nor come under any legal framework. They are fluid and this enables them to be inclusive as well as broad based and massive in numbers. But it also demands from them unity of purpose , single minded thrusts, which in turn requires shared knowledge , clarity of purpose - attributes of efficiency. They need to be taken seriously by agencies of the State and Society as the most vital safeguards to democracy and for sustaining the democratic spaces outside of the conventional structures ,which are often suffocated, crippled.

It is only the networking, and more importantly, the coalescing of such diverse and dispersed efforts that can reverse the flow of resources. This is the crux of autonomy and self-determination.

The institutional frameworks that develop at intermediary levels will be the ultimate test of our networking and advocacy skills. Success at this level will determine whether the dispersed initiatives can come together over a period of time to coalesce into Structural Transformation, or die in the wilderness.

What the network movement needs is a fistful of salt, a symbolic unifying gesture to roll back the overwhelming force of the current paradigm of development - but not through essays and articles but through international solidarity on one public action.

Decide to network

Use every letter you write, every conversation you have

Every meeting you attend to express your fundamental beliefs and dreams

Affirm to others the vision of the world you want

Network through thought, Network through action

Network through love, Network through the spirit

You are the center of a network; you are the center of the world

You are a free immensely powerful source of life and goodness

Affirm it

Spread it

Radiate it

Think day and night about it

And you will see a miracle happen;

The greatness of your own life,

In a world of big powers, media and monopolies

But of four and a half billion individuals

Networking is the new freedom, the new democracy, a new form of happiness.

-Robert Muller

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Why SANSAD

For millions of people in South Asia, the twenty-first century has not brought freedom from poverty, hunger, disease or death. South Asia is home to fifty percent of the world's hungry and forty-three percent of world's poor. Today, about 540 million South Asians or forty-five percent of the population in South Asia lives Below the Poverty Line (BPL) and earns less than \$1 a day! Over 278 million go without clean drinking water and over 879 million do not have any proper sanitation. Approximately, 276 million or twenty-two percent of people living in South Asia have no access to basic health facilities and over four million children die annually in this region due to hunger and poverty related reasons.

To make the situation worse, unjust global agricultural trade and agricultural policies are having a life-defining impact locally. Agriculture in the region is central to all national economies. Two-thirds of the population in each country earns their livelihoods from agriculture. Agriculture determines social stability in the region and is an important engine for overall economic growth. However, governments of the region are not protecting the livelihood of farmers and rural communities. Instead, governments barter away peoples' interests to agribusiness corporations whose only interest in food, agricultural production and trade is to make huge profits. In South Asia today, we are witness to declining food security, increasing starvation deaths, frequent farmer suicides, and overall sustainable livelihoods, along with unstable democratic processes.

Therefore, it is increasingly being realized by Civil Society Organizations in South Asia that these issues cannot be addressed without urgent and immediate cross-country initiatives both at micro and macro levels. Given agriculture's central position in the region, civil society cannot leave matters only to governments, but needs to take advocacy actions and interventions that include efforts to influence policies, particularly on trade and agriculture, with a pro-marginalized bias-whereby governments and multilateral organizations like SAARC, WTO, G20, etc. are forced to accept the developmental needs of the region.

Hence, there is a tangible need to build a regional network and alliance of multifarious but like-minded actors who can operate at different levels with a multi-pronged and multiskilled approach, with a shared vision to make South Asia free from hunger and poverty. South Asian Network for Social and Agricultural Development [SANSAD] is a regional level network of the like-minded voluntary organizations, academic institutions, farmers and trade associations.

Vision

To make South Asia free from hunger and poverty.

Mission

To take global and regional initiatives for sustainable agriculture, rural development and human dignity aimed at putting collective pressure on policy makers.

Broad Objectives

To catalyze, support and strengthen civil society in promoting sustainable livelihood, ecological agriculture, food sovereignty, and equitable trade with focus on human dignity of poor and marginalized people in South Asia.

To undertake training, research, publication and build capacities to promote economic, social and gender justice.

To promote a democratic, accountable and transparent system of governance and create an enabling and supportive environment for development initiatives in South Asian countries.

To build alliances and network at national and international levels in order to campaign and advocate policies for the marginalized in agriculture, agricultural trade, farming systems, natural resources, ecological balance and human welfare.

Interventions for Change

SANSAD organizes mass campaigns, public debates, advocacy workshops, build alliances, and forges partnerships between the civil society and Northern NGOs with similar objectives, on issues of agriculture, poverty, hunger, food sovereignty, and social development.

SANSAD attempts to go beyond activism to analyze policies and advocate at decision-making and implementation levels for policies and programmes in favour of the poor in South Asia.

SANSAD brings together farmers and trade associations, academic institutions, like-minded voluntary organizations on a common platform to strengthen advocacy campaigns for policy changes with respect to hunger, poverty, agriculture and trade. SANSAD makes all efforts to involve the rural communities in all advocacy efforts.

SANSAD shall endeavour to develop strategies to defend the livelihoods of South Asia's poor and hungry.

SANSAD shall become a Resource Center that will function as a nodal agency for research, documentation, collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and reference materials.