



## **Participatory Communication & Action**

*six-day residential workshop*

September 25 – 30, 2008  
Environment Education Centre, Talegaon

Organised & Facilitated by



media matters

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## Participatory Communication & Action

PCA is an approach, a belief that media matters has been working with since past 8 years. Working with community groups, NGOs, networks, government on issues related gender, violence, reproductive health, child rights, HIV & AIDS, theatre, participation, songs, facilitation has strengthened our belief in the potential and scope of PCA.

The term came into being much later and since then annual workshops have been an opportunity for us to share our experiences, learning and challenges.

PCA approach believes in the capacity of the people, groups and communities to assess their situation, analyse its causes and work towards action for change. PCA tools are designed, adapted and introduced to provoke reflection, thinking and dialogue rather than “feeding” the right answers. PCA believes in a process of bringing about a shift from 'no access/participation' to participation in designing or production to 'handing over of the tools' and thereby transforming the role of the group and/or community from being 'consumers' to that of being 'producers' leading to a process of empowerment.



The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Participatory Communication & Action workshop received participants working in the area of HIV & AIDS, environment, bio-diversity, community participation & governance, gender based violence, health, issues related to child rights and community theatre. A total of 27 participants (11 female and 16 male) in the age group of 17 years to 50 years from states of states of Sikkim, Meghalaya, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka stayed together to share, dialogue, demonstrate and understand Participatory Communication & Action.



## *Solah Mein Solah Tambola!*

The workshop begins with a welcome to all participants and a round of some quick instructions.

The workshop environment begins to set in and the participants begin to feel comfortable as an ice breaker is introduced. The participants get up from their sitting positions, begin to run, reach out to one another to know who can sing, shout slogans, ride a bullock cart, climb tree, sleep at any time, eat any number of rasgollas, can speak more than five languages and has more than 20 years of experience. In no time the room is filled with sounds of laughter, people rushing to one another, writing names on the sheets. This continues till one of them shouts *Solah Mein Solah Tambola!*

The day one flows in to series of introductions as participants share about themselves, their work and their organisation. They talk about the social issues that they have worked on, communication methods and tools used, its learning and challenges.

It is a long day for the participants – a few arriving on the same day after a long travel, preparing for the presentation and listening to the presentations made by each organisation.



## Whose Need, Whose Agenda?

Following three-days delves upon approaches to development, understanding rights, participation, communication and its approaches.

Activities, exercises, games songs, group work, sharing, dialogue created forums for the participants to reflect, articulate, challenge and explore concepts based on their experiences, belief, approach and focus. The participants struggle to articulate their own definition of rights, participation, development, communication.

The process creates non-threatening atmosphere for the participants to share strengths, learning, self realisation of the processes and approach followed. A few of them voice that it is a challenge to be able bring in the highest level of group or community participation since organisations and donors have their agenda.

It was a journey of sharing, discussion, reflection, a process of unlearning. A struggle to understand approaches, define rights, relate it to work, identify contradictions and explore options for practice. One of the participant said, “...mein apne zameer ke hisaab se logon ke saath kaam karna chahata hu”.



## Process and Participation – a necessity or a luxury?

Day five and six was an opportunity to understand Participatory Communication & Action, as an approach, as a tool and method. Tools like role play, drawing, taking a stand, group discussion, posters, theatre were introduced and discussed.

Participatory Communication & Action (PCA) an approach that designs, adapts and introduces tools with the purpose of provoking reflection and initiating dialogue rather than “feeding” the right answers. PCA as an approach which believes in the capacity of the people, groups and communities to assess their situation, analyse its causes and work towards action for change. PCA a process of bringing about a shift from 'no access' to participation in designing or production to 'handing over of the tools' thereby transforming the groups and communities from being 'consumers' to empowering them as 'producers'.

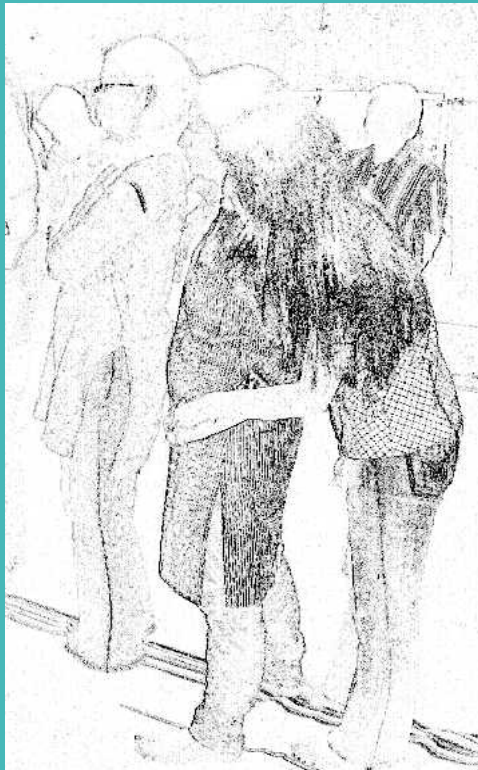


## *Sawaalon Ke Beej!*

The workshop created open spaces during tea break, evening break and late night open sessions to informally clarify, interact and share among themselves. A few questions that arose as part of the workshop process:

- Who is poor?; Why are people poor?
- Who is an expert - the facilitator or the community/group?
- Which side of the fence do I belong?
- Is it possible to have a participatory process in the community or with a group unless there is participation of all in the organisation?

One of the participant said, “ the workshop has been a process of self discovery for me.”



## Feedback to the workshop

Alimeen

• what did I feel & like ~

→ got an opportunity to be amidst an "alive" group compared to my other experiences in recent past.

→ got to know how to deal with a group that possesses amazing diversity.

→ body language of facilitators.

इसलिए का महत्त्व है कि हमारे बीच का व अंतरों को भी समझना चाहिए। यदि हम एकदूसरे को समझेंगे तो हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे। हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे तो हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे।

हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे तो हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे। हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे तो हम एक-दूसरे को बेहतर ढंग से समझ सकेंगे।

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PAST 6 DAYS - HOW?

