

# **National Workshop on PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

25th to 27th August 1999  
(Sponsored by CIRDAP - Dhaka)

PAPER PRESENTED ON:

## **USING NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TO ACHIEVE REPLICABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

BY

**M. R. ARULRAJA**  
CONSULTANT  
ANDHRA PRADESH ACADEMY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
[GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH]  
HYDERABAD

Seminar Held at the National Institute of Rural Development  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030

\*\*\*\*\*

**T**he Government of India and the State Governments have, over the years, realized the necessity and usefulness of continuously training their officers and the people for successfully implementing Development Programmes.

For instance, in the Watershed Development Projects, the Government of India sets apart rupees one lakh (5% of total outlay) per watershed for training purposes.

There are at least three major areas in which to train the parties to a development project:

1. The technical aspect of the project.
2. The managerial aspect of the project.
3. Capacity Building of different project partners.

Various institutions that impart developmental training have, by and large, successfully addressed the first two areas of training. The third is, only now, beginning to be appreciated and addressed Capacity Building exercises have implications such as the following:

1. For the Implementing Agencies:

- A. Creating a belief and trust in people that they can develop.
- B. Replacing the feeling of insecurity with confidence in self so that officers don't fear to share knowledge, resources and power with the people.
- C. Tasting one's own and others' limitless inner potentials.

2. And for the people:

- A. Overcoming the low self-image held by individuals and acquiring a "WE CAN DO IT" feeling by the community.
- B. Giving up divisions based on caste, sex, politics, religion etc., and experiencing success by coming together in unity.
- C. Become pro-active to initiate, implement, sustain and replicate development efforts.

Obviously, the task of building capacity implies effecting changes in the behaviour of parties concerned - a task related to the field of psychology!

Neuro-Linguistic Programming [NLP] is a science of the mind developed some two decades back by Richard Bandler, John Grinder and others. Each human activity/behaviour results from a set of commands originating from the brain. Thus, behaviour has structure. NLP makes this structure explicit and easily learnable by all.

The Private Sector already uses NLP extensively in various areas, like the training of managers, the sales-representatives, in advertising campaigns etc. I present here some reasons I consider important for using NLP by those involved in training for rural development.

**I. NLP believes all human behaviour have structures and they are useful in some context.**

In the midst of ruthless oppression, fear of and submission to others might have helped the oppressed people to survive in the pasts. But, today, they might opt to show courage and assert their rights to live a life with freedom and dignity.

NLP offers the technology to change one's behaviour according to one's choice. NLP is useful for getting rid of any behaviour that no longer serves any useful purpose: like, shyness, lack of initiative, aggressiveness... etc.

**II. The impoverished mental maps of the world we carry in our heads cause much of the problems we have.**

NLP teaches that "Map is not the Territory"

a. Those who commit suicide, typically, have reached the end of their maps. And, those who suffer pain are those who don't see options around to choose from. NLP helps people to reconnect with world that offers unlimited options.

b. For instance, we have hundreds of villages in Adilabad District, where people suffer during summer for non-availability of drinking water, this district gets an average annual rainfall of 1044mm. You could meet people there who complain: "No one is coming to our help!" Their mental map gives them no option but to look for help from outside.

c. Poverty amidst abundant natural resources is, often, the result of impoverished mental maps of people that don't offer them options to turn resources into wealth. The Meta-model of NLP is an excellent tool to expand one's map to include available options.

**III. NLP believes that every one has the required resources for changing one's behaviour.**

All we need is to learn the easy steps to tap our inner resources.

a. Almost, all the time, our untrained brains keep running their own programs and produce results that we don't like. It's like (as Bandler would say) being chained to the last seat of a bus which is being

driven by a drunken driver! It is as if, we have not yet learnt the art of using our own brain! The brain keeps running on its own!

b. For instance, a brilliant student, who does extremely well in the exams, could fail to secure a job. His/her brain projects scary pictures each time he/she sits for the job-interview. The person could teach his/her brain to select and project a confidence-giving picture from the store of his/her own past and feel comfortable during an interview. NLP could help to enhance the quality of the retrieved picture by using its sub-modalities.

c. People who experience difficulty to question officials and their leaders when they go wrong could be made to feel comfortable while dealing with them. Perhaps, a simple exercise of visualizing themselves as tall as the others could solve this problem of low self-image. And, these are resources available to each one from within to effect change in behavior.

#### **IV. NLP is a science of modeling human behaviour.**

a. As Bandler would say, some people enjoyed immunity from small pox much before a scientist could develop a vaccine. And, it was common knowledge as to who were immune to smallpox. But it did require a scientist to model the way people became immune and make it available to any one who wanted to achieve immunity to smallpox. If one does not know the technique of modeling, one might only get frustrated attempting to replicate someone's success:

b. On returning from a long and expensive exposure visit to a model watershed, people might end up saying: "Oh, we need one Anna Hazaare for each village as a Project Implementing Agent and twenty years of committed service to create a successful watershed!"

c. NLP people study those who achieved something and make the methods achievers used available to all. Such studies have resulted in development of powerful tools for effecting behavioural change in oneself and others.

#### **V. NLP is also a science of communication.**

NLP holds that communication is what communication achieves.

a. A communicator must examine oneself first when communication fails. Yet, we speak of only students with learning disabilities and not of teachers with teaching disabilities!

b. In the context of Water & Sanitation project, a line department engineer is addressing villagers: "If you build toilets in your houses the sanitation of our environment will surely improve..." To make sense of this statement, the listeners' unconscious minds search for images: pictures of filthy toilets they say in bus stations or cinema theatres flash through... followed by pictures of their homes...And they try fitting their homes with one such toilet... The speaker has already lost his audience and his project too!

1 For a development project to succeed, people must first feel and experience the project in their sub-conscious minds as something positive, desirable and life enhancing.

2 For that project to be sustainable, people must acquire a feeling of ownership of the project.

3 For another community to replicate a successful project, they must be told about the success story in such a way that they fall deeply in love with the idea. Once in love, no power on earth could stop them from achieving what they love!

***Feeling, experiencing and falling in love...*** All belong to the realm of the mind. And, it is time, we, the agents of social change turn to the science that has studied the mind so deeply - the Neuro Linguistic Programming - to achieve behavioural change in ourselves and in the people we serve.