

OPEATIONALISATION OF ORGANISATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Perspective Plan 2001–2006 is the outcome of one of the recommendations of the evaluations carried out in 1999–2000. Disha too realised that they need to take stoke of the programmes/activities carried out in the past, consolidating the same, assessing the outcome/impact, and on the basis of this and possibly informed choices, chalk out future directions.

The perspective planning exercise revealed that a change, especially in structural matters was necessary. The need for this change was felt by the top leadership, by the team and the Executive Committee. Accordingly, Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra was requested to facilitate the OD intervention.

Out of the strategic choices recommended, Disha has decided to utilise the experience and expertise gained so far and work through the following two approaches:

1. Implementation at the field level;
2. Through the establishment of a Research, Training and Policy unit.

The above approaches are necessary because the evaluation felt that Disha needs to strike a balance between an activist and developmental approach. Perhaps some of Disha's actions as activist had prompted the evaluators to make this recommendation. But the times when Disha takes up the role of activists are those when all other options fail. Activism is a role of advocacy. In any case, the gap between activists and volunteers needs to be bridged. EVERY VOLUNTEER IS AN ACTIVIST FOR THE COMMON GOOD, AND EVERY ACTIVIST UNDERTAKES THEIR ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OUT OF THE VOLUNTARY SPIRIT. Therefore, Disha is not unduly disturbed by the strategies it adopts.

However, there is an urgent need to streamline its programmes. For this a new structure is required.

Disha carries out the following programmes:

1. Women's issues
2. Communication
3. Micro Savings and Credit

4. Sustainable Agriculture
5. Local Self-Governance

However, the OD process revealed that some changes specially in the areas of activities and programmes need to be undertaken. There appears to be a lack of clarity of the difference between activities and programmes. The first step was to revalidate vision and mission statements.

Vision

To establish an equitable society where there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion and caste and which provides equal social, economic and political opportunities

Mission

To mobilise women, poor, downtrodden and weaker sections into sustainable groups so as to achieve their social, economic and political empowerment

Revalidation of vision and mission led to formulation of strategy.

Strategy

To mobilise the target group and strengthen them in a manner that they are able to address their developmental needs themselves

For this Disha has formed people's groups, women's groups, morchas, etc., capacities are strengthened through regular inputs from the organisation. Presently, strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions is also going on. Thereafter, the confusion between programmes and activities was clarified and a fresh list of programmes was formulated.

Programmes

1. Women Empowerment

- A. Combating Violence Against Women, Counselling, Legal Aid, and Advocacy
- B. Education for Adolescent Girls
- C. Short Stay Home (To Be Initiated)
- D. ...
- E. ...

2. Livelihood Promotion

- A. Micro Savings and Credit
- B. Diversification of Agriculture
- C. Sustainable Agriculture (To Be Initiated)
- D. ...
- E. ...

3. Natural Resource Management

- A. Joint Forest Management
- B. Watershed Conservation and Development
- C. ...
- D. ...

4. Strengthening Grassroots Institutions

- A. Local Self-Governance
- B. CBOs (Morchas)
- C. Communal Harmony and Cultural Events
- D. Land Issues
- E. ...
- F. ...

5. Research, Training, Information and Advocacy

- A. Training
- B. Documentation
- C. Research/Studies
- D. Communication
- E. ...
- F. ...

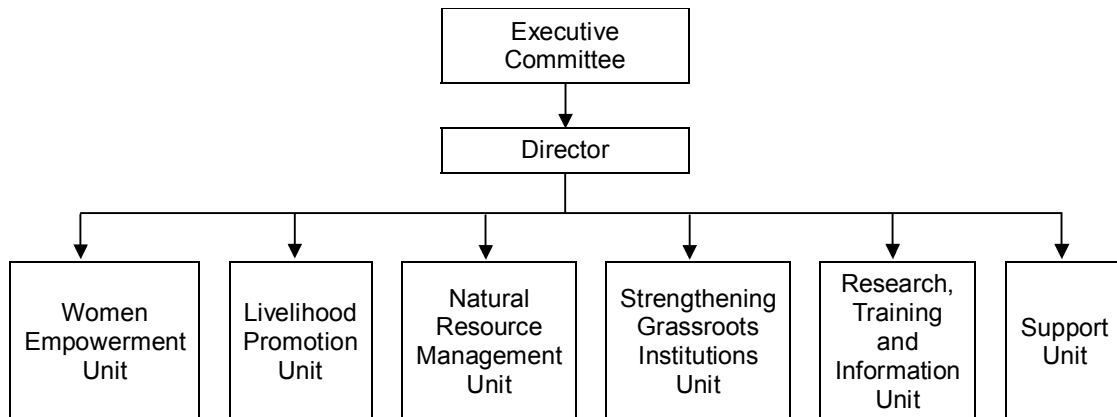
This exercise led to clarify the difference between programmes and activities. The re-articulation of vision, mission, strategy and programmes enabled Disha to realise why they are doing what they are doing. The programmes were once again reviewed to match with the mission statement. This helped Disha in establishing programme units.

Programme Units

1. Women Empowerment Unit
2. Livelihood Promotion Unit
3. Natural Resource Management Unit

4. Strengthening Grassroots Institutions Unit
5. Research, Training and Information Unit

The establishment of programme units enabled Disha to devise an organisational structure that fits the mission because it is important to see how work is actually done. The structure is as under:



Each unit will be headed by a Unit Co-ordinator. Research, Training and Information Unit will draw from the other four programme units and will contribute to them as well. The Support Unit will comprise Accounts, Training Centre, maintenance of assets and other support activities.

The formation of structure led to the issue of relationships. The formal structure is, however, not in the form of watertight compartments. The relationship that has so far existed between peers and various functionaries will continue as before and it will be attempted to achieve a high degree of synergy between units doing different tasks.

It was revealed that while systems in Disha are not exactly formal, nevertheless certain norms have been established to which all abide by. Most of the systems are usually decided on a personal basis, that is, they are need based. A common understanding of certain rules and regulations exists in Disha. Since the systems and norms have worked quite efficiently so far Disha does not see any reason to bring about any change in them. The functionaries are aware of required interdependence and quality of relations. The Director has developed a precise understanding of his role. However, it is important for him to examine the extent to which this understanding results in his using mechanisms designed to keep formal and informal systems in balance.

A distinction between full time, part time, and development trainees was made and their levels of remuneration described. The broad norms were also listed out.

This also led to the decision on rewards. The reward system is very simple. It is usually based on performance. It is also dependent on the amount of honorarium available in a particular project. Exceptional performances are rewarded in terms of promotions and incentives.

Disha has been created to pursue certain Socio-economic-political objectives. The new structural properties of the Organisation are bound to influence key process and attitudes of the functionaries in the Organisation. It is hoped that this particular OD intervention will work towards creating an enduring Process Sensitivity among members of the Organisation i.e. sensitivity to how the circumstances are shaping their attitudes and behaviour. Training or re-training can be brought in later, if necessary, essentially to help the functionaries fit smoothly into the restructured circumstances.