Models and Approaches of Community Organization Method

Introduction: The development of any nation depends on the development of its people. Hence, most of the governmental and non-governmental organizations devise different developmental programmes for their communities. For proper planning and implementation of these programmes, they need to understand different models of community organization. Model is nothing but a window through which a community worker looks at the complex nature of community. Those who want to work with communities should have a theoretical framework of knowledge. It helps in working smoothly. It facilitates them in deciding and adopting different strategies to achieve the ultimate goal of community development. It also helps the community worker to decide what skills and techniques are to be used during different meetings with people, roles to be played, etc.

Models of Community Organization

Jack Rothman (1974) has given the following three models of community organization:

- **Locality Development Model**: Locality development model presupposes that community change may be pursued optimally through broad participation of a wide spectrum of people at the local community level in goal determination and action. This model emphasizes the process of community building. In other words, its main focus is on the whole community or on a part of it. It believes that communities have some common needs and interests. Once the people realize their needs and interests, they come together to solve them to improve the quality of their life. According to Dunham (1970) this model is based on five elements, namely:
  - Democratic procedures
  - Voluntary cooperation
  - Self-help
  - Development of local leadership (indigenous leadership)
  - Education
If this model is used while working with the communities, one can see increase in local people’s participation in all the programmes. It increases the capabilities of local people. Because of increase in cooperation, development of local leadership is promoted. The ultimate result of this model shows empowerment of people. The main challenge to the community worker using locality development model is how to increase the community participation. For understanding the community, he/she has to use different strategies and techniques such as meeting and interviewing key informants and conducting focus group discussions. The community worker should make special efforts to involve community and political leaders, members of agencies working in that area and other professionals. She/he should ensure that marginalized people also participate in the assessment of common needs and interests. The community worker also has to create opportunities for equal participation especially during the process of problem-solving and decision-making. Identifying common interests and needs, and accordingly deciding common goals/objectives for development is an important part in the whole process. The major role of the community worker in implementing locality development model is that of an enabler and a catalyst. She/he brings people together (organizational skills), initiates communication (problem solving), and develops understanding to promote interpersonal relationship among the community members. The NGOs who want to implement various schemes and programmes to fulfill the needs of a particular area or community may use this model. It involves networking and coordination with various agencies who offer different services for the welfare of communities.

- **Social Planning Model**
  Social planning model is basically concerned with social problems. Its main goal is to solve community problems. It emphasizes a technical process of problem-solving with regard to social problems such as housing, health, etc. As stated by Rothman, rational, deliberatively planned and controlled change has a central place in this model. The community worker can collect information regarding the needs of the community and services available in that particular community/area. Based on this, he can suggest solutions to get the maximum benefits from these services. For example, problems of
housing, illiteracy, non-availability of appropriate health services, etc. are important issues which need attention. Once the data is collected, the analysis of the data may be done by the worker or professionals. Accordingly, decisions are taken by professionals. Issues are prioritized by service providers. At this stage, the involvement of community people in planning is almost negligible. In other words, the power remains with planners and service providers. In this process, conflict may arise between the community and service providers. In this model, planning is done for and not with community people. Somewhere, the feeling of donor and receiver comes. This also increases dependency on outsiders. In short, capacity building and empowerment of community people for development is not a major goal of this model. The planner normally establishes contacts with the organization and/or government body and makes arrangement to deliver services which fulfill the needs of the community. By using this model, there might be either consensus or conflict with the people. There are various services to cater to the needs of a society such as health, education, sanitation, employment, etc. Social planning model presupposes that change requires expert planners. Through expert’s technical abilities and skills of dealing with bureaucrats, they can bring the desired change. The focus here is on establishing, arranging, and delivering goods and services to people who need them. The role of a community worker in this model is that of a researcher (who can collect data), programme implementer, and spokesperson (if required) with bureaucrats.

• Social Action Model
Each society has small communities and groups. They are directly controlled by the governments’ policies and laws. Informally, they are controlled by the customs, traditions and beliefs of the respective community as well. All these factors decide the social rights of an individual. The macro level policies affect the micro level people. This model aims to change decisions, societal structures and cultural beliefs. Social action is a strategy used by groups or communities who feel that they have inadequate power and resources to meet their needs. This model presupposes a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be organized, in order to make adequate demands. They are deprived of resources. To give them social
justice and bring democracy, equality in real sense of the word, this approach is practiced. To bring equality, one has to confront the power structure. It aims at making basic changes in major institutions or community practices. This model emphasizes on social justice, equality, redistribution of power and resources, participation in decision-making and/or changing basic policies of formal organizations. It demands for improved treatment. Conflict as a method is used to solve their issues related to inequalities and deprivation, especially for the issues like women’s liberation, reservation policy, right to information, etc. Social action model focuses on the review of social policies and practices that continue to disempower and oppress the marginalized people. It aims to achieve social progress by modifying social policies and changing social legislations (if required) and welfare services. The role of the community worker may be of an activist or advocate. She/he creates opportunities for marginalized people to participate, be heard and makes decisions on activities that affect their quality of life. Social action model use change tactics of conflict or contrast, such as confrontation and direct action or negotiation. Some of the tactics usually used in the social action model are campaigns, appeals, petitions, boycotts, strikes, picketing, sit-ins, etc. But some tactics are non-violent yet illegal and represent a form of civil disobedience. In this model, the community worker uses all means to pressurize the power structure to give justice to the people. The role of a community worker may be that of an advocate, activist, agitator, broker, mediator or negotiator, depending on the issues and situations. This is a long process which goes through different stages. It is very difficult to predict the success rate. However, the community worker can sow the seeds of social change. The role of a community worker also changes at every stage. The well-known examples of this model are Narmada Bachao Andolan, Lokpal Vidheyak, and Right to Information Act.

The practice of each of these models may require certain techniques and skills. Many community workers use a combination of more than one model.
Approaches to Community Organization

History witnessed a variety of approaches to community organization. Neighbourhood organizing approach is one of the important approaches implemented during 20th century onwards. The feature of this approach is that people of the community put efforts to solve their day-to-day problems and help those in need. There are in reality three approaches:

- **The social work approach:** The main focus is on the whole society. It pays more attention towards building a sense of community. This approach was used in USA during social settlement movement and war on poverty alleviation programme in the 1960s. In this approach, the community worker plays the role of an enabler and/or advocate. She/he helps the community in identifying their problems and tries to overcome them by gathering existing resources from the community and getting some help from the people who are in power.

- **The political activist approach:** Saul Alinsky is the founder of this approach. Philosophy behind this approach is “more the representatives in the organization, stronger the organization”. In this approach, he looked at the community as a political entity. The approach says that most of the problems are due to unequal distribution of power and resources. Power is concentrated in the hands of a few people and the majority of the community is deprived of it. Hence, they focus on gaining the power. In doing so, they face conflict with the groups with vested interests. The role of a community worker at times, is that of facilitator, sometimes of a leader as well. She/he has to help people to understand the problem in terms of power, make them understand how it is directly and/or indirectly affecting their lives and how they are denied of their rights and help them to take necessary steps to resolve these issues. This approach has the potential of bringing equality as it emphasizes on rights-based approach.

- **Neighbourhood maintenance/community development approach:** This approach is a combination of earlier two approaches. It uses peer group
pressure to provide services in the community. The strategy includes pressurizing the officials to deliver the services to the community. Appropriate phasing and mixing of these models can be done to bring sustainable development.