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## UNIT 2 SOCIAL MOBILISATION SKILLS

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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In Unit 1 you have learnt about communication skill, which will help you to communicate effectively with the community. As you know the health of a community is dependent not only on the availability of drugs and medical technology but also on the social system, employment, education, ecology and climate. People's level of health is determined by their nutrition, life style, attitudes and health practices. Social norms, customs and traditions have a strong influence on health practices and habits of living. Involvement of people is thus essential for bringing about any change on a large scale. As a health care provider you have to promote positive health practices and therefore require the mobilisation of the people in large masses so that large-scale changes take place.

Public health deals with the health of people and the promotion of optimum health of all its members. Social mobilisation in public health is essential for the success of large-scale government sponsored national programmes like the pulse polio immunisation programme.

In this unit you will study the concept and types of social mobilisation and how they can be used for the successful implementation of health programmes at grass root level. You will see the important role played by social mobilisation in large national programmes like the pulse polio immunisation.

## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- become familiar with the concepts of social mobilisation;
- appreciate the uses of social mobilisation;
- appreciate the role of health worker as a social mobiliser; and
- develop capacity for undertaking social mobilisation.

## 2.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Social mobilisation is undertaken for the purpose of social change and involves masses. All mass movements are based on principles of social mobilisation.

The dictionary meaning of Social Mobilisation is: The process by which individuals or sections of society mobilise in order to effect social change- Oxford Dictionary

Social mobilisation is not a single event. It is sometimes a very long drawn process and may take even months or years. However, some social mobilisation takes only a few days. All social mobilisation do not follow the same path. Some stay for a longer period (sustained) and some stay for shorter period that is immediately after the goal is achieved. Whether it rises suddenly with a specific goal or grows as a wave over time the process usually leaves an impression on people who participated in it.

### 2.2.1 Nature

Social mobilisation is the process of activating a large group of people in a given community to participate in an event, activity or process of social nature which is intended to bring about a change in people's attitudes, knowledge or actions. Social mobilisation is essential for gaining the support of masses for an activity which requires acceptance, approval and adoption by the majority.

### 2.2.2 Benefits of Social Mobilisation

- 1) enhances the capacity of individual, group and community, to identify and fulfill their needs
- 2) increases community participation in the programme
- 3) helps to improve programme design
- 4) helps to improve quality and results of the programme
- 5) is a cost effective way to achieve sustainable result
- 6) increases community ownership
- 7) enables communities to determine their own development
- 8) helps to builds trust within communities so they can work together effectively
- 9) increases capacity of communities to work with government and other sectors (health services, research etc.)
- 10) helps to apply political pressure and create positive change

### 2.2.3 Need of Social Mobilisation

Social mobilisation is a proven development strategy that has helped people around the world identify and address pressing issues. For making any community based programme successful and its sustainable, the involvement of community from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is essential for which there is a need of mobilisation of the members of the community and other stakeholders who can be involved in the programme. The social mobilisation is needed for.

- 1) **Creating awareness:** The aware community can identify their problems, felt needs and can demand for interventions which will help to develop culturally appropriate strategies and messages. This also helps to increase people's skill, knowledge and confidence and install in them a belief that they can make a difference.
- 2) **Community participation:** Involvement of community and stakeholders in the programme increases effectiveness and efficiency of interventions and to obtain additional resources and support to make the programme cost effective. It also helps in reaching the most vulnerable and needy members of the society.
- 3) **Increasing community ownership and sustainability:** Social mobilisation is needed for developing community ownership and sense of responsibility. This helps in increasing coverage and access to information and services.
- 4) **Empowering community:** The social mobilisation activities increase the capacity of the stakeholders in, decision-making, planning, programme implementation and analysis. When a community is empowered, people feel free to act within the society and at the same time associate a sense of belonging to it.

Social mobilisation is needed in various situations as given below:

- When large number of people have to be involved.
- When new programmes or policies requiring people's opinion or participation are introduced.
- When beneficiaries involvement is crucial to the success of the programmes.
- When behavioural changes need to be brought about in masses.

### 2.2.4 Uses

Social mobilisation plays an important role in social change and development. The most important uses are:

- To gain public support for a policy, programme, product or activity or service.
- To involve people in a large scale activity which the agency wants to be completed within a specific period of time e.g. camps and campaigns.
- To sustain development through involvement of people and enhancing the process of behaviour change.
- To ensure that the desired change take place faster which is possible by inducement of people.

- It helps to understand the felt needs of the people.
- It helps to empower individuals and groups for action.

## 2.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Social mobilisation process is of following types:

- Controlled and Spontaneous
- Specific and General

### 2.3.1 Controlled and Spontaneous

#### Controlled

Controlled mobilisation starts outside the people who are part of the process. The planning and initiative are done elsewhere and people are only passive participants initially. They may be convinced enough to become more active forces later and may even take hold of the movement and carry it forward. One example is the immunisation awareness about the benefits of immunisation and adopting the practice. Another example is family planning. The sterilisation camps were highly effective in mobilising the entire nation into accepting the tubectomy/ non-scalpel vasectomy as the best suited form of birth control.

#### Spontaneous

Spontaneous movements start out of people's own reactions to actual or perceived wrong and injustices. The reactions may be against the establishment or other agencies and individuals. The mobilisation is sparked off through a recent event which affects people's lives or emotions. The initiators are filled with zeal and enthusiasm. Everyone would like to participate and contribute to an activity. This highly charged and intense phase is short lived. The initial enthusiasm dies down and people go on to other interests. You must have felt this type of process when there has been a maternal death in a village. When you went around to invite villagers for a meeting to prepare an action plan to reduce maternal mortality, you must have found that it is easier immediately after this event. You could mobilise them easily.

### 2.3.2 Specific and General

#### Specific

Specific issues related to groups of people or daily living are taken up as the content of social mobilisation. The antiliquor movement dealt with one issue for which there was large-scale social mobilisation. The fever of activity and the high level of participation of people after a natural calamity like cyclone in the bay of Bengal or earthquake are well known. Another example is the high level of patriotic enthusiasm and activity during the Kargil conflict. All political parties try to mobilise people to their way of thinking for a specific purpose during elections. In the same way mobilising support during pulse polio, or other national programmes is for specific purposes. Most of these are very short processes.

#### General

The purpose of this type of social mobilisation is overall development of people. For example, mobilisation for introducing the local self-government

through the 72nd amendment of the constitution (Panchayati Raj) is with the goal of achieving a more decentralised process and enhancing people's participation. This takes longer to start as well as to maintain but once introduced it lasts longer.

Campaigns are well planned and systematically conducted activities for a specific purpose. Social mobilisation may not always be a planned activity. It may start due to an incident and may go beyond a specific activity. Social mobilisation may form a part of a large campaign or programme.

*Let us take the example of a health professional at the grass roots that wants to mobilise the people of the villages in her area for avoiding rational use of injections. How will this person start and make a progress? Will she call for a village level meeting through the village president or announce through the village public address system or visit each house? Which is the best way to start?*

When people on a large scale have to be mobilised for a specific purpose, it is not always necessary or even wise to start with the actual issue. An entry point something of paramount importance to them is required which will outreach the people. Some examples of entry points for social mobilisation could be:

- i) Current problems of the people: The people are more likely to listen if it is current problem giving them trouble e.g. recent floods or epidemics.
- ii) An issue on problem, which affects the majority: In such a case the community mobilisation can get the attention of the majority in the villages or basti. Dealing with the problem of the majority will show that the differences are forgotten and togetherness is built. This will help later in the process of social mobilisation.
- iii) Actual, religious or social event: At this event, there will be many people and they are in a mood to listen and remember. The first contact can be done through such an event.

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## 2.4 SOCIAL MOBILISATION

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Social Mobilisation should focus on building confidence, trust and respect, increasing knowledge base, and enabling community members to participate, and become more proactive with regard to their own health behaviour.

### 2.4.1 Pre-requisites for Social Mobilisation

Pre-requisites for social mobilisation include the following:

- Purpose or goal for which mobilisation is required.
- Leader who will inspire and encourage participants and spearhead the movement.
- Symbols for unification and building togetherness: slogans, banners, songs, badges.
- Messages which are used for mobilisation and the content of these messages in the form of speeches, pamphlets, booklets and songs etc. to keep alive the involvement and interest.

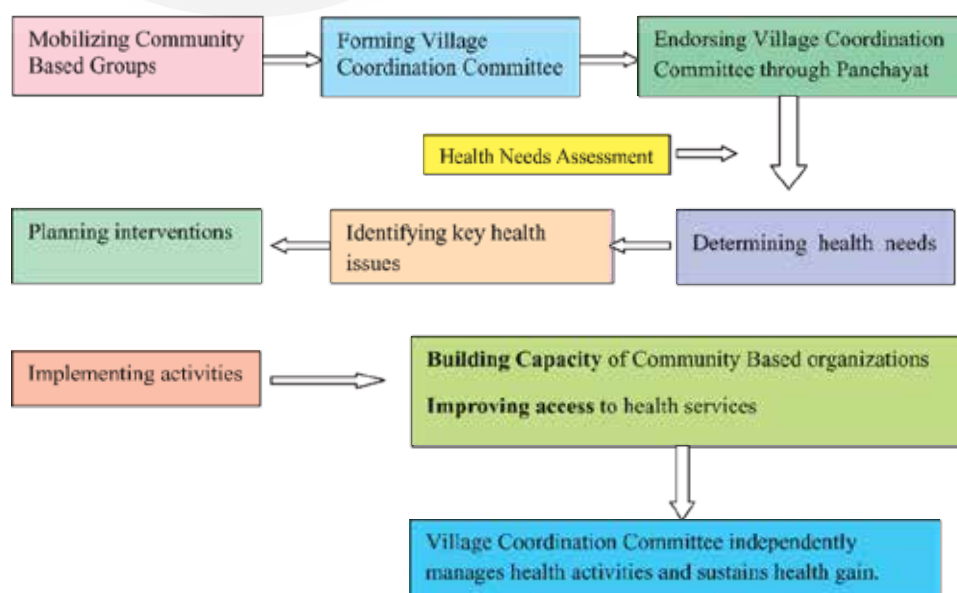
- Network of managers and workers who will organise and take responsibility for different components of the social mobilisation.
- Funds, which will help in keeping intention and action closer together and make sure that the intended activities are carried out without obstacles.
- Publicity and news in the form of media coverage, latest reports including an efficient system of dissemination of information.

## 2.4.2 Process of Social Mobilisation at the Village Level

Social mobilisation is not easy task because every community has its own beliefs, values culture, leadership, social systems, social groups, religion and interests. Hence it is necessary for the social mobilises to understand the community for whom the programme is being undertaken. However the following steps can be taken for Social Mobilisation.

- Initiate dialogue with community members to understand their interests, felt needs, resources, level of understanding, their perceptions, views about the programme, identify all the available resources in the community. Plan the best use of the available resources.
- Form new or identify existing community based organisations (like various committees, Self Help Groups, Village Development Forum etc.) and involve them the programme activities. Provide training if needed.
- Try to create an environment in which individuals can empower themselves to address their own and their community's health needs.
- Promote community participation by developing partnership with the community.
- Promote good leadership and democratic decision making.
- Enable the community to better govern itself better play a catalyst role.

### Example of Social Mobilisation for Health in Rural Area



Go to the people  
Live with them Learn from them  
Start with what they have  
Built with what they have  
But with the best leaders  
When the work is done  
The task accomplished  
The people will say  
We have done this ourselves

**A Chinese Poem**

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## **2.5 QUALITIES OF A HEALTH WORKER FOR SOCIAL MOBILISATION**

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A Social Mobiliser is a person who mobilises relevant segments of society: decision and policy makers, opinion leaders, bureaucrats and technocrats, professional groups, religious associations, commerce and industry, communities and individuals. He should have respect towards the social culture, social values and faith that the community has potential to take decision and shoulder responsibilities. He/she should have the following qualities.

- Good communication skills
- Good facilitation skills
- Active listener
- Committed
- Decision maker
- Active
- Negotiation skills
- Known to culture and values of society
- Catalyst
- Non judgmental
- Good Management skills
- Responsible
- Honest
- Knowledgeable
- Social
- Good observer
- Leadership

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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Social Mobilisation is essential in Community Based Interventions especially in the field of Community Health. Social mobilisation is a process that enables people in different sectors and at various levels of society to engage in dialogue, negotiation and collective action. And the purpose of social mobilisation is to bring together organisations, policymakers and communities to forge a collective identity and to work toward a goal. We have mentioned the importance and benefits of social mobilisation. We have also given various steps in the process of Social mobilisation enlisted the qualities of a health worker required for Social Mobilisation.

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## 2.7 ACTIVITY

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Identify a situation to mobilise the community leaders so that they participate in planning for the community as per their need.

- Make them such as environmental sanitation
- Use social toilet
- Avoid open defecation
- Document the way you make people participate
- You faced barrier in the process of making social mobilisation