

**MYRADA**

*Rural Management Systems Series*  
*Paper - 23*

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## **BILL DAVINSON MEMORIAL WORKSHOPS - I**

### **VISION BUILDING**

**9th & 10th September 1995**

**Held At: Rural Training Centre, H.D.Kote Project**

**Facilitated By : Mr.Bhupendra Sharma, EREHWON, Bangalore**

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*This was the first of several workshops planned for a group of staff from 8 MYRADA Projects (participant list attached) aimed at strengthening their professional competence in carrying out rural development programmes.*

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The workshop coincided with the Tenth Death Anniversary of Mr.William Davinson, MYRADA's first Executive Director. The focus was, appropriately enough, on building a Vision for MYRADA : an organisation nurtured by Mr.Davinson from its inception in 1968 right upto his own demise in September 1985 to give its creative best to the field of rural development.

These workshop notes are not exhaustive, since the sessions relied largely on lengthy discussions amongst participants in small groups to address a series of issues. These notes summarise the key points that emerged over the period of two days.

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**New Concepts :**

**PARADIGMS & PARADIGM SHIFTS :**

Paradigms are cause - and - effect frameworks that condition our perceptions, and consequently, our actions when faced with typical situations.

Eg. **Perception** : Large groups cause confusion in training programmes.

**Action** : Keep group size to less than 25. Have more number of training batches if the participants number more than 25.

Paradigms fix the boundaries within which we operate. Everyone of us is consciously or unconsciously governed by many paradigms in our everyday lives.

Paradigm shifts occur when existing paradigms are challenged (either by choice or under pressure or, at times, accidentally) such that we break away from the existing frameworks and do something different.

Eg. **By Choice** : “Is it not possible to train large groups successfully?  
(self-questioning) I’m sure I can do it if I modify my training techniques.”

**Under Pressure** : When 25 people are invited for training and 40 people show up whom we cannot send back. We are forced to think of techniques that can handle the large group. This then provides us a framework for similar situations in future.

**By Accident** : “Instead of the usual lecture, I used the ‘sangha’ film to clarify SHG concepts. All 25 participants understood the basic concepts well. Even if there had been 100 people they would have understood the concept.

Innovations result from paradigm shifts.

Eg. **Paradigm** : MYRADA has to support SHGs with working capital.  
**Paradigm Shift** : Banks can link up directly with SHGs

In our work, we have to constantly question our paradigms in order to innovate and improve our quality and range of services.

**What is seemingly impossible through one paradigm becomes surprisingly simple in another paradigm.**

In order to remain leaders in the field of rural development our **SUCCESS CRITERIA** and **DEFINITION OF 'GOOD'** must change from time to time.

The responsibility of an innovator is not just to throw up good ideas - it is also the ability to translate ideas into action successfully.

### **VERTICAL THINKING AND HORIZONTAL THINKING :**

Vertical thinking is thinking that proceeds along one direction. Horizontal thinking is thinking that explores more than one direction. Vertical thinking produces expertise along a given area of thought; horizontal thinking results in innovation from exploring several trains of thoughts. **DOING THE SAME THINGS BETTER vs. FINDING A BETTER THING TO DO :** A combination of both is the formula for success.

### **COMPLAINT ORIENTATION AND SOLUTION ORIENTATION :**

This refers to people types. There are some people in every organisation who complain all the time about why things cannot get better. There are others who recognise problems either within themselves or within the organisation but instead of remaining content with merely complaining they actively engage in finding solutions. The latter are the people who contribute to success.

**ACHIEVEMENT GRID FOR ORGANISATIONS :**

[This was not discussed at the workshop but can be appropriately incorporated here.]

Achievement Performance	H I G H	WORK HORSES	STARS
	L O W	DEAD WOOD	PROBLEMATIC PEOPLE
		LOW	HIGH
		Achievement	Potential

The workshop also discussed the following sets of questions in small groups, that were later consolidated in the plenary sessions leading to the formulation of a shared vision for MYRADA by the year 2000 A.D.

**First set of Questions :**

- ◆ Why are new ideas resisted?
- ◆ What may block our vision for the future?
- ◆ What can create new paradigms?
- ◆ How can paradigms help/hinder our work?

**Second Question :**

- ♣ What would I like MYRADA to be by the year 2000 A.D.? [At least 10 statements expressing the participants' individual sentiments]

**Third set of Questions :**

- ♣ Who are the stakeholders of our organisation? How do we work with them? How do we produce value for them?
- ♣ Who/What influences our organisation the most?
- ♣ What is the image of our organisation in the field of rural development? How are we better than others?
- ♣ What is our unique contribution to the world around us? What is the impact of our work?
- ♣ How do we organise our finances?

- ♣ What does our organisation look like in terms of physical/organisational structure and communication patterns?
- ♣ How do we share our good times with one another? And how do we support one another in bad times?
- ♣ How have we ensured that our future is safe?
- ♣ What is the role of our organisation in the community?

**Fourth Question :**

- ♥ What are the major strengths and weaknesses of our organisation? What are the major threats to our organisation?

**Fifth set of Questions :**

What are the new things we need to develop/do in our organisation (with regard to systems, skills, attitudes, new directions, etc.)?

What resources are already available to us and what resources do we need to create/acquire in order to do the above?

What kind of people will constitute our team? Where and how do we get these people? Why would they want to be a part of us, i.e., what is the motivation for such people to join our team?

What kinds of things should we **stop** doing (that we are currently doing)?

What the things that we need to know (that we don't know at present)?

What are the positive elements in other institutions that we can also adopt?

What **five core values** should we build in our organisation in order to carry us forward to our vision?

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The answers to the above questions were consolidated to yield a vision for MYRADA by 2000 A.D. This has been attached to this report.

Other major outputs were consolidated as follows :

**A.**

<b>Strengths of MYRADA</b>	<b>Weaknesses of MYRADA</b>	<b>Threats for MYRADA</b>
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<b>Strengths of MYRADA</b>	<b>Weaknesses of MYRADA</b>	<b>Threats for MYRADA</b>
<p><b>Staff :</b> Are committed, have vision clarity, are innovative, are flexible, are professional, are dynamic.</p> <p>Mobility is good (i.e. vehicles are provided.)</p> <p>Infrastructure facilities are good.</p> <p>Approach to issues is participatory &amp; bottom up.</p> <p>Good organising capacity.</p> <p>Positive influence on other institutions.</p>	<p>There is some amount of staff turnover and staff stagnation.</p> <p>Training skills are adequate.</p> <p>Documentation skills are poor.</p> <p>There is under utilisation of training centres.</p> <p>Lack of systematic follow-up (in some areas).</p> <p>Staff are weak in communication skills.</p> <p>There is inadequate and irregular impact analysis and evaluation.</p>	<p>Good staff may leave us. (turnover).</p> <p>Insecurity among the Contract staff.</p> <p>Collaboration with Government is good, but it also creates several problems.</p> <p>External funding may diminish.</p>
<p>Good reputation</p> <p>Quality of work is good.</p> <p>Funding status is good.</p> <p>Working with poor people.</p> <p>Working with large number of people for better impact.</p> <p>Networking is good.</p>	<p>Personal problems of staff are not always addressed.</p> <p>Staff potential is not fully tapped.</p> <p>Poor maintenance of buildings and equipment.</p> <p>“Will our efforts (eg. group building) survive after we have withdrawn?” this is a question in the minds of the staff.</p>	
<p>Open to new ideas.</p> <p>Organisation has self-confidence.</p> <p>Organisation is working in difficult areas under dire conditions.</p>		

**B.** The core values to be fostered in the organisation were listed as follows :

Team Work Innovation Tolerance Accountability Commitment Hard work Positive attitude Trust Respect Spirit to learn Participation in all matters	Out of this list the following five were listed as most essential :  TEAM WORK COMMITMENT SPIRIT TO LEARN INNOVATION TRUST
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**Plan of Action :**

At the close of the workshop the participants decided that :

1. The '**Vision**' chart would be enlarged and prominently displayed at each Project Office so that staff could continuously reflect on the same and work towards achieving the vision.
2. Each participant group would repeat the workshop with the other staff of their respective projects.
3. Each project would develop a plan of action that would help in achieving the Vision.

