

SWOT ANALYSIS – A USEFUL TOOL FOR COMMUNITY VISION

A concept paper of central Himalayan village

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Abstract: SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective. SWOT analysis provides a framework for visioning by helping the planners to identify and priorities the organization's GOALS and to further identifies the strategies of achieving them. SWOT analysis is a technique to analyze the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats of a decision, problem ad place etc. In community development or urban planning SWOT is often used at community meeting to structure conversations about projects carrying out this analysis often illuminates what needs to be done and puts problems in to prospective. A tool that identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of an organization. Specifically, SWOT is a basic, straightforward model that assesses what an organization can and cannot do as well as its potential opportunities and threats. The method of SWOT analysis is to take the information from an environmental analysis and separate it into internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external issues (opportunities and threats). Once this is completed, SWOT analysis determines what may assist the firm in accomplishing its objectives, and what obstacles must be overcome or minimized to achieve desired results. [Researcher. 2009;1(3):25-27]. (ISSN: 1553-9865).

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SWOT ANALYSIS FOR THE VILLAGE PATHARKOT- AN EXAMPLE

Small holder farming system: strategies for economic and environmental viability in Western Himalaya is addressing the project objectives as (assessment of farming systems and its economic growth in western Himalaya, identify on farm and off farm income issues/ option, restore the village commons, strengthen the village institutions and to develop pathways and policies) in a span of five years. It is identifying basic related to farming system development with a main focus on documenting 'best stories' of successful community initiatives for on and off farm livelihoods and natural resource management and implementation of such initiatives as per community prospective in a rural set up. Patharkot village has been identified as one such site to begin with. Village Patharkot is situated in Kosi watershed, Hawalbagh block, Almora district Uttarakhand.

Village Profile & landuse – Box 1

PATHARKOT

Profile of the village

Total Population – 733

Nos. of families – 106

Population:

Male – 433

Female – 300

Literacy:

Male – 95%

Female – 71%

Nos. of SC families – 9

Service holders - 14%

Land use:

Total area: 163.62 ha

Van – panchyat: 33.40 ha

Agriculture: 65.97 ha

Others: 64.24 ha

(Wastelands & settlements)

No. of agriculture fields: 739

Box No. 1 & 2 - Profile and landuse of the village

APPRECIATIVE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

The appreciative participatory planning was focused to develop/ built a common community vision for village development along with empowering the community and individuals to take initiatives for development planning by taking the pride in what and who they are, and what they do; to dream of what they might be after 10,20, 30..... years; to plan that what can be given the village / individual resources; and to energize the community through making commitments and taking such progress themselves. The effort was to assist them to vision and plan conservation and economic development which would help the community in the long term. The above whole concept was based on the SWOT analysis of the rural community in village Patharkot.

SWOT ANALYSIS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The exercise was focused on and aimed to understand the status of the village or community in terms of their strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. The discussion highlighted some important components that are crucial for community led planning process for the area. The analysis identified following points.

VILLAGE STRENGTHS

- Collective Strengths and unity of the villagers
- Better natural resource base
- Organized men and women groups/ institutions in the village
- Availability of enough agricultural lands
- Basic infrastructure
- Good educational status of the villagers
- A well established Paryavaran Samati working since 1992
- Strong will power of the villagers for village development

WEAKNESS

- Few water sources are drying
- Poor health facilities
- Poor livelihoods opportunities and low technical know how
- Communication gap between government and villagers
- Rainfed agriculture, low productivity of the agriculture fields, traditional cropping and no concept in cash crops
- Infestation of Kurmula (a local name of white grub insects) in agricultural fields
- Great deficit in fodder and fuel

OPPORTUNITIES

- Use of modern techniques in agriculture, new cropping pattern and scope of irrigation in agriculture
- Soil improvement by different institutions such as GBPIHED Kosi and VPKAS Almora
- Development of cash crops and horticulture in the village
- Conservation of natural resources by villagers as well as different village institutions
- Development of wastelands, abandon lands and other village lands
- Promotion of different livelihoods opportunities in dairy, farming practices, horticulture, poultry, fisheries, candle making and other sectors.

THREATS

- Crop damage by wild animals
- Occasional forest fire
- Low rain fall and dry season for crops
- Lack of funds and technical knowledge in agricultural fields

SHARED VISION OF VILLAGERS AFTER SWOT ANALYSIS

After SWOT analysis of the village a complete exercise was done to develop a shared community vision for development of village. The basic approach used was to visualize the major areas that are key factors for the village development. Based on this exercise the following five categories identified and prioritized by villagers for their village development for future.

1. Conservation and utilization of natural resources (with particular reference to water and forest)
2. Development of the wasteland, agriculture and livestock sector
3. Promotion of livelihoods resources and human resource development
4. Promotion of health, cleanliness and education
5. Development of village institutions

CONCLUSION

After the above shared vision in different prioritized issues there was a clear action plan for the village development. All villagers discussed at length the major activities to be taken up in future for the village development. SWOT analysis was very much helpful in whole approach for this action plan for villagers as well as project activities also. As a conclusion SWOT analysis is very important tool or activity for community shared vision.

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