

Preamble

Two of the principal TorqAid staff¹ carried out some practical development field work in early 2014 in West Bengal, India, where they were involved in the facilitation of some customised Participatory Project Management (PPM) training for an Indian Foundation. Two of the participatory tools used were;

- The Ten Seed Technique (TST) ranking tool
- The Seasonal Calendar

Ten Seed Technique (TST) Ranking tool.

The Ten Seed Technique (TST) is an easy-to-use, highly participatory tool. It consists of the following three steps:

- Brainstorming of an issue
- Ranking of the brainstormed items
- Group work discussion on the items mentioned



In the Indian context described above, two separate issues were brainstormed. The first highlighted the positive factors already existing within the community; whilst the second was the series of challenges which faced it.

These two issues were therefore:

- The key strengths of the community²
- The key development challenges facing the community

¹ Namely the CEO/Senior Facilitator, and MPH Nutritionist

²² The actual question posed (in Bengali) to the group was the following: 'Whilst there are many poor people in this and surrounding villages, there are also many positive features of this community, which can help promote good development. What are these?'

Key strengths of the community

For the first of these exercises, a total of eleven separate factors were brainstormed, with the results of the TST ranking exercise³ being the following.

Community Strengths: Factors brainstormed	Scores
Folk culture	56
Natural beauty	45
People are hard working	41
Natural resources	27
Unity & cooperation	27
Handicrafts & cottage industries	27
Ancient language & social system	26
Clean environment	25
Leprosy health centres	22
Colleges & higher education (university)	21
Historical places (heritage sites)	18



³ For the TST, each person is allocated ten stick-on dots. These are then placed against each person's choice of the eleven factors mentioned, with but a single rule taken into account...this being that no more than four dots can be placed any single factor

Challenges facing the Community

The second TST ranking exercise focussed in on the development challenges faced by the community. There were 16 items identified, with the results of the scoring summarised below⁴.

Challenges faced: Factors brainstormed	Scores	Groups
Unemployment	68	A
Water, agriculture, lack of food	60	B
Transport	36	
Alcohol	25	C
Humanity, social justice & self-respect	25	C
Health & , hygiene & sanitation	23	D
Women, domestic violence	20	E
Poverty	17	A
Child marriage & dowry	16	E
Lack of women's education	15	
Injustice & lack of human dignity	13	
Industry not developed	12	
Child labour	12	
Irregular electricity supply	9	
Not proper distribution of wealth	9	
Not good drainage	8	

The key challenges were then summarising into three main groups:

- A : Unemployment and poverty
- B : Water, agriculture, and lack of food
- C : Alcohol, social justice & self-respect issues
- D : Health, hygiene and sanitation
- E : Domestic violence, child marriage and dowry issues

Participants were then divided into these five groups (A-E) for discussion, with three separate issues being tackled:.

- Causes of the challenges identified
- Effects of the challenges identified
- Some practical solutions

⁴ In practice some of these categories could perhaps have been joined together, namely unemployment and poverty; together with humanity/social justice/self-respect, possibly with injustice/lack of human dignity

Seasonal Calendar

The seasonal calendar basically divides the year up into months, with the key activities carried out by women over this period. The exercise then involves a group of village women having a series of 20 stones which they then discuss and place in each of the categories mentioned below.

- Rainfall
- Water sources and availability
- Agricultural labour
- Sickness
- Food availability
- Income in
- Demands on income
- Labour at home
- Other outside non-farm labour



The day before this particular exercise took place, the staff involved had invited a number of village women⁵ to attend the training on the next day, at the agency's Community Centre (CC). This actual exercise was carried out on the concrete floor of one of the classrooms (using chalk and the afore-mentioned stones), and a visual matrix of this is included at Appendix B. Following a later revision of the seasonal calendar, agency staff and village members can then use this visual document to both discuss the existing situation existing throughout the year, and discuss some new development initiatives which might contribute to a better overall quality of individual and community life.

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November 2018

⁵ The photograph here illustrates the village women just after they had carried out the Seasonal Calendar exercise in one of the classrooms. Before the exercise had begun, they had joined the other PPM participants for lunch in one of the other classrooms

Appendix B: Draft⁶ Seasonal Calendar (Women) for rural village, West Bengal, India.. (Main activities ranked using modified TST {20 dots})

	Mid Apr – mid May	Mid May- mid Jun	Mid Jun - mid July	Mid Jul- mid Aug	Mid Aug – mid Sept	Mid Sept -mid Oct	Mid Oct – mid Nov	Mid Nov – mid Dec	Mid Dec – Mid Jan	Mid Jan – mid Feb	Mid Feb – mid Mar	Mid Mar – mid Apr
Rainfall	0	0	0000	00000	000	0	0	0		0	0	0
Water Sources & Availability			00000	00000	0	00	00	0	0	0	0	
Agricultural Labour	0	0	000000 <i>rice sowing</i>	00000 <i>rice sowing</i>	0 <i>sowing</i>	0 <i>Rice cutting , lentil</i>	0 <i>Rice cut, veg harvest</i>	0 <i>Planting potatoes</i>	0 <i>Planting tomatoes</i>	0 <i>Cabbage plant</i>	0 <i>Cutting vegetables</i>	
Sickness	0 <i>skin & pox</i>	0 <i>tiredness (hot)</i>	00 <i>diarrahoea</i>	0 <i>Fever, cough</i>	00000 <i>Diarrahoea, skin, fever</i>	0				0000 <i>cough</i>	0000 <i>cough</i>	00 <i>pox</i>
Food Availability	0 <i>Mango, rice, veg</i>	0 <i>Rice, veg (small)</i>	0 <i>Rice, veg (small)</i>	0 <i>rice</i>	buy	buy	0 <i>Veg, rice, buy</i>	0	000000	000000	00	0 <i>rice dust</i>
Money In		0	0	0	0		0	0000000 <i>selling rice</i>	0000 <i>Rice husks</i>	000	00	0
Money Out	000 <i>Marriage electricity</i>	00 <i>Building house, marriage</i>	00 <i>Marriage, paid labour</i>	000 <i>Snake ceremony</i>		0 <i>big festivals, 5 days dress/food</i>	0 <i>Khali festival food/rice</i>	0 <i>Local festival, 1 day rice</i>	0 <i>medicine</i>	00 <i>Festival, medicine</i>	0 <i>Khali</i>	
Labour at home	00 <i>sewing</i>	0 <i>sewing</i>	0 <i>Cooking (labour)</i>				000 <i>house repairs</i>	0 <i>Food for labourers</i>	0000 <i>Rice milling, drying</i>	00000 <i>Home milling</i>	000 <i>milling rice</i>	0 <i>Sewing leaves</i>
Other Labour	00 <i>brick making</i>	00 <i>brick factory</i>	00 <i>Brick factory</i>				0	0		00000 <i>Pond making</i>	00000 <i>Pond & well</i>	00 <i>ponds</i>

⁶ Ideally this needs to be double-checked by the agency staff team in the village in West Bengal, working in conjunction with the same group of 15 village women