

Sharing Series 9

*Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP):
A Motivational and Empowering Tool
for Community Development*



Using NLP as a tool to
empower women leaders
and poor rural widows



Bala Vikasa Social Service Society

In 1990, Bala Vikasa was established in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, as an Indian counterpart to SOPAR, a Canadian Non-government Organization. In 1991, it became a registered, secular, non-partisan, non-profit, voluntary, social service organization. Through its collaboration with donor agencies in Canada and Europe, Bala Vikasa assumes a dual role, that of an implementer and a fund provider.

Philosophy

People themselves have to be the true agents of change. Development is primarily for the people and by the people and thus the motto of Bala Vikasa is 'to help people to help themselves'.

Objectives

- Provide support for socio-economic development of the rural poor, especially women.
- Plan, implement, monitor, evaluate development programs.
- Provide institutional support to partner organizations.
- Impart required training for interested community based organizations.

Strategy

- Concentrate on holistic development programs, primarily on the intrinsic social and ethical aspects of human interaction, gradually leading women/community to economic development.
- Help build confidence and a desirable value system by inculcating discipline and human values, like dedication to work, self esteem, respect for the environment, sensitivity to the less privileged, and willingness to participate in community development activities.
- Build partnerships through collaboration with donor agencies and networks to share and work together with the people.
- Focus on replicable, manageable, accountable and sustainable development programs.

Development Programs supported by Bala Vikasa

- Drinking Water through Bore Wells and Over Head Tank systems.
- Surface Water Management through desiltation of traditional water tanks.
- Safe water supply through Water Purification (Defluoridation) System.
- Farmers Cooperatives.
- Healthy Environment and Quality Education to the Children in Rural Public Schools.
- Youth Participation Program.
- Integrated Women Development Program.
- Community sponsorship and scholarship for orphans and poor rural students.
- Training in Community-driven development through its People Development Training Center.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT



In applying NLP techniques to its development program, Bala Vikasa is particularly indebted to Dr. Magimai Pragasam who, as an accredited NLP practitioner, continues to share his knowledge and experience with the Bala Vikasa family - its staff and the thousands of people under Bala Vikasa banner. Dr. Magimai has also largely contributed to this publication.

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FOREWORD

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a new technology, being used as an effective tool in promoting community development. NLP is a powerful instrument to identify one's personal strengths, rediscover the hidden potential, motivate one to increase self confidence, open one's mind to dream of the future and empower the person to pursue and fulfill his or her dream.

Community Driven Development, as the name denotes, is "People Centric". It is fundamentally based on optimism. It believes that humankind has strengths and goodness, and an innate capacity to take its destiny into its own hand, for its own good.

The road to a better life-qualitatively and quantitatively-is not an easy one to travel. Acknowledging this, the primary development rule of Bala Vikasa is founded on "Development is People",¹ It recognizes that people have the inherent qualities required for empowerment and positive achievement. It also admits that there are negative forces in human nature. However, Bala Vikasa, through its development experience over the last two decades at the grassroots, fully acknowledges that motivation and empowerment can help people to overcome pessimistic attitudes. Towards achieving this, Bala Vikasa conducts continuous capacity building training programs, which not only help create awareness but also provide the skills to cope with the new consciousness.

Since Bala Vikasa is one of the few organizations that has integrated the techniques of NLP, and continues to do so, it desires to share through SS9, the lessons learned in using the two portent development mechanisms - Motivation and Empowerment - to

¹ Bala Vikasa, Sharing Series 4, Drinking Water: A Catalyst for Community Development, (March 2006).

change people's negative attitudes/mindset, and also to share its experience and experiment of leading people, especially the rural poor women, to a better future.

Chapter One of SS9 provides information on NLP, a new technology. Chapter Two briefly describes what constitutes Community Driven Development from Bala Vikasa's perspective. Chapter Three illustrates the new approach of integrating NLP in Community Development, a requisite for sustainable development, and essential for Agents of Change to be effective and efficient. Chapter Four, 'The Bala Vikasa Way' portrays how Bala Vikasa has integrated NLP in practical terms in its community development process. It illustrates Bala Vikasa's experience of successfully using the techniques of NLP during its training sessions held for women leaders and poor rural widows among the 1,80,000 Bala Vikasa women. This chapter also lists the outcomes of the sessions through the testimonies of the women leaders who being influenced by NLP felt encouraged to set their future goals and were raring to pursue their dreams, and of the once ostracized and discriminated widows, who on being empowered though NLP, gained confidence to exert their rights and move on in life.

Bala Vikasa wishes to share its experience through this Sharing Series 9, hoping that it will be helpful to other like-minded organizations and Agents of Change.

CHAPTER ONE

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP): The New Technology

NLP and its Techniques

NLP is the acronym for Neuro-Linguistic Programming. "**Neuro** refers to our nervous system, the mental pathways of our five senses by which we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. **Linguistic** refers to our ability to use language and how specific words and phrases mirror our mental worlds. Linguistic also refers to our "silent language" or postures, gestures, and habits that reveal our thinking styles, beliefs, etc. **Programming** is borrowed from computer science, to suggest that our thoughts, feelings, and actions are simply habitual programs that can be changed by upgrading our "mental software"."²



NLP is the study of human achievement. It is at the cutting edge of human development because it teaches the fundamentals of how our brain works. "NLP is the powerful and practical approach to personal change."³

"NLP is a modern branch of psychology, radically differing from tradition, right from its basic assumptions" and as such often time discredited by traditional psychologists.⁴ NLP teaches people how to use their minds as winners do and to achieve results like them.

NLP techniques "are used internationally in fields such as sports, business, sales, education, health and enable us not only to reach out and influence others but also to reach in and unify all the different parts of ourselves."⁵

² NLP The New Technology of Achievement, p.27

³ Steve Andreas and Charles Faulkner, NLP The New Technology of Achievement, pp.26-27

⁴ Arulraja, Achieving Rural Development Using Neuro Linguistic Programming, p.3

⁵ Joseph O'Connor and Ian McDermott, NLP, p.3

NLP was pioneered by Mr Arulraja,⁶ a well known Indian social activist and consultant, as an effective tool in promoting community development.

"In the mid 1970s, while traditional psychologists were busy studying broken minds with a view to fix them, Richard Bandler and John Grinder were probing the secrets of exceptionally successful minds while discovering how specifically they used their brains differently from others as achievers in order to help the average person perform exceptionally well.⁷

The NLP Presuppositions⁸

"While traditional clinical psychology is primarily concerned with describing difficulties, categorizing them and searching for historical causes, NLP is interested in how our thoughts, actions and feelings work together right now to produce our experience. Thus NLP begins with new principles of how the mind/brain works. These principles or assumptions are called the NLP Presuppositions. These presuppositions can be summarized in one phrase: **People work perfectly.**

Our specific thoughts, actions, and feelings consistently produce specific results. If we repeat the same thoughts, actions, and feeling, we will get the same results. **The process works perfectly.** If we want to change our results, then we need to change the thoughts, actions, and feelings that go into producing them. Understanding this process, it becomes a simple matter for us to change our inner thoughts and feeling to more useful ones or if we find better ones to teach them to others.

The following are the 10 NLP Presuppositions:

- **The map is not the territory:** Our mental maps of the world are not the world. We respond to our maps, rather than directly to the world. Mental maps can be changed or updated.
- **Experience as structure:** Our thoughts and memories have a pattern to them. When we change that pattern/structure, our experience will automatically change.

⁶ Arulraja, M.R. Achieving Rural Development Using Neuro Linguistic Programming

⁷ Ibid. p. 3

⁸ NLP The New Technology of Achievement, pp.35-37

- **If one person can do something, anyone can learn to do it:** by learning an achiever's mental map, it can become our own.
- **The mind and body are the same system:** When we learn to change either one, we learn to change the other. Mind and body are inter-connected.
- **People have all the resources they need:** Mental images, inner voices, feelings, etc., are the basic building blocks of our mental and physical resources. We can use them to build up any thought, feeling or skill we want and then place them in our lives where we want or need them most. All of us are working the way we have been programmed and are responsible for the outcome of our lives. If we ignite our mind and gear it towards prosperity, the end result will be prosperity.
- **You cannot not communicate:** We are always communicating at least nonverbally.
- **The meaning of your communication is the response you get:** Others receive what we say and respond through their mental map of the world. Noticing how our communication is received allows us to adjust it, so that next time it can be clearer.
- **Underlying every behaviour is a positive intention:** Every harmful behaviour has a positive purpose in its original situation. Rather than condoning these actions, we can separate them from the person's positive intent, so that new and more positive choices can be added that meet the same intent.
- **People are always making the best choice(s) available to them:** From our past history and experiences, we must make all of our choices until new and better ones are added.
- **If what you are doing is not working, do something else, do anything else that may work:** If you want something new try something new.

NLP Presuppositions are assumed to be true - not because they have been proven, but because when they are held in mind, they give their holder a much greater degree of freedom of choice and opportunities

The presuppositions of NLP help us to understand the human potentials, root causes for human issues and various possibilities for growth.

NLP presumes that there are no failures but only feedback. One need not get discouraged about an undesirable result but should treat it as a learning experience to move forward with more confidence and faith.

NLP presumes that everyone can achieve what anyone else has achieved by modelling the behaviour of the achievers. People need not reinvent the wheel again and again. Successful people offer us ways and means to achieve success. We need to replicate the behaviour of successful people.

NLP presumes that there is a difference between reality and our perception of reality. It says, map is not territory. We operate not on the world directly but on the maps we carry in our mind about the world. We need to sharpen our sensing abilities to absorb the reality as close as possible. When we feed information into the brain, it automatically carries out three functions, namely, deletion, distortion and generalisation. These three functions have their own merits and demerits. Nevertheless, an accurate perception of reality will help us to process the information well and approach life accordingly.

NLP: The Key to Move Forward

Rejection by the family members, discrimination by the community, loneliness, helplessness, economic hardships, pressure from the children are some of the crucial problems faced by certain sections of a community, who lead a tenuous life. Unable to solve their problems, they often resort to suicide. Since they are not able to recognise opportunities existing in the world, they are not able to identify their own strengths, skills and opportunities that could help solve their problems. This is because their mental map of the world is not a promising one but a discouraging one.

Deletion

A map is only a representation of reality and not the reality itself. Hence, a map may not have details as it is only a representation. We perceive the reality through our five senses and store information in our mind. When we perceive the world, we pay attention to some and leave out the rest. The agony and pain experienced by people whose lives are fragile, are so intense, that such people are not able to look at the bright side of their life. Those information, insights, imagination, inspiration get deleted in the process. It does not mean that they do not exist.

When villagers discourage and discriminate people who lead very fragile lives, such people should stand up for their rights, have a positive outlook to life, which is not yet over for them. They can become an inspiration and motivation to others in distress by becoming leaders, such as in self help groups, organising meetings, giving speeches and even becoming entrepreneurs by managing small scale businesses. Marginalized people have to open their eyes, ears and senses to closely observe the reality that exists around them. . They have to learn from the success stories of others and store them in their minds. Awareness building is the key to creative imagination and problem solving.

Distortion

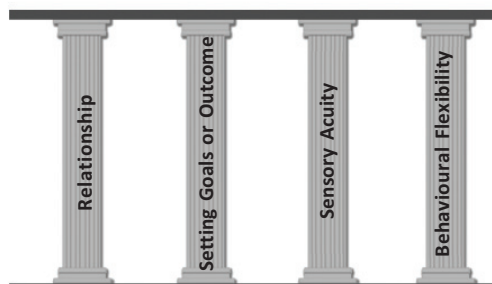
The sounds, images or feelings that we hear, see and feel are not sent to the brain exactly as per the reality. They get distorted, twisted, interpreted due to various influences, for example, our religion, caste, language, beliefs, values, attitudes, habits and so on. We use filters in understanding the reality. We brand people based on past experiences and pre-conceived notions. A distorted representation can affect one's ability to progressive thinking and behaviour. We need to have as many options as possible for a task to be accomplished. Distorted interpretations of reality may deprive us from using opportunities to achieve success. Questioning the options before hand and knocking various doors of alternatives can throw more light, so that distorted information can be read in new angle, new perspective and new light.

Generalisation

We need not discover the purpose of lock and key every time we come across a lock and key of different sizes and models. We can generalise information from a few experiences and apply them to newer situations. Generalisation has its own advantages and disadvantages. As generalisation is done based on past experiences, if the past experience is limited, we may end up with misinterpretation about people, things and experiences.

There is a notion among people that villagers in general are lazy, unchangeable, illiterate and poor in understanding information. Rural people often keep saying that their fate has already been written on their forehead and no change is possible in their lives. They have a feeling that they are born to suffer and the poor have to remain poor. Such generalisations surely can hinder the growth whereas the world has lots of success stories which talk about the capacity of such people who lead fragile lives. More information, experiences and data are needed before we arrive at generalisation.

The Four Pillars of NLP



Relationship

NLP lays emphasis on building quality relationship of mutual trust and responsiveness known as rapport. One has to have quality relationship with oneself and with others as well. The greater the degree of physical rapport one has with oneself, the greater will be one's health and well being. NLP says that body and mind belong to the same family. They work well with

each other. You will experience peace with yourself when you have good mental rapport with yourself as different parts of your mind are united.

When you feel that you belong to a larger whole, moving beyond individual identity and knowing your place in creation, your spiritual rapport is heightened. One needs to attain it in order to experience peace and happiness. Many who have lots of wealth, are yet unhappy with themselves. They make others too unhappy. We arrange the world in such a way it reflects our internal state. Hence, internal conflicts create external ones. The quality of the rapport we have with ourselves is often a mirror of what we achieve with others. When we are happy and peaceful with ourselves, we tend to achieve the same with others. We try to influence others to be in the similar state of mind. This is known as the first pillar of NLP, establishing rapport with yourself and then others.

Marginalized people need to be at peace with themselves. They need to realise that they belong to a larger whole and part of this universe. Inner peace will enable them to create an external world of peace where they can establish better relationship with others.

Setting Goals or Outcome

The second pillar of NLP is 'knowing what you want'. Without knowing what you want, you cannot describe or define what is success. This is called 'setting your goal or outcome'. One needs to consistently ask 'what do I want' and other, 'what do you want'? This is different from the way we usually ask, 'what is the problem'? Many people start by asking this question, then blame others, then they might reach a solution but do not really get what they really want or help others with what they really want.

People leading a tenuous life need to know exactly what they want and what their goal in life is. If their mind revolves around only problems, by raising questions like what the problem is and who created them, etc., they may not end up with what do they really want. Having a clear picture of destination is very important.

Sensory Acuity

The third pillar of NLP is known as sensory acuity. Sensory acuity is defined as the ability to observe, examine, and interpret the external cues received from other people. Sensory acuity for Neuro-linguistic Programming is used for training our mind to see and listen to the non-verbal communication such as body language, eye movements, etc. This deals with what is happening to you when you see, listen and feel. This informs you whether you are on the right path towards your goal. Sensory acuity (seeing, hearing, feeling physically and emotionally, smelling and tasting) is a critical piece of NLP and your life. It is important for you to be aware of:

- Feedback/information that indicates the extent to which you are on or off target in achieving your outcomes.
- Other people's actions and reactions to certain situations/stimuli.
- How you are reacting to certain situations/stimuli.

Behavioural Flexibility

Behavioural flexibility is the ability to vary one's own behaviour in order to elicit, or secure, a response from another person. It is developing a series of responses to any given stimulus opposite to our usual, habitual responses which limit our performance potential. John Grinder suggests that each night before going to sleep, we need to review the day and create 3 different ways of responding. This way we will automatically build up our Behavioural Flexibility and we will discover that we respond more appropriately to the world around us. Behavioural Flexibility is a key element in NLP. It recommends many choices of action. The more choices you have, the more chances of success you get. Keep changing what you do until you get what you want. This sounds simple but many a time we do the opposite. An issue can never have only one solution. There must be several solutions and we need to try one after the other till we succeed.

For instance, when we apply this to India's poor marginalized farmers committing suicide, this need not be the only response to the problems they face. In general, people tend to escape from a problematic situation. Escapism curbs the opportunities to confront the issues to produce positive results. Smokers say that they smoke to get inspiration. Alcoholics say they drink to forget their problems. In both cases, they invite more problems rather than find solutions to their problems. No one gets inspiration by ruining one's lungs. No one can forget problems by consuming alcohol as they remain problems till one actually addresses them directly. Creative responses are needed for positive results.

Some NLP techniques⁹

Anchoring

An anchor is any stimulus that changes our state. It can involve any kind of sensory input-visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory or gustatory. Our state is created by our sensory experience, our thought processes and our physiology. If an anchor is fired off that changes any one of these, our state will change. This anchor could be external. Anchors can also be generated in the mind, e.g., A visual image. Our behaviour can be an anchor for others, triggering their responses.

Anchors "fire associations or memories and can put us into resourceful or un-resourceful state although often we are unconscious of anchors and how they affect us."

We should think of "anchors" when we find ourselves in an unwanted state all of a sudden. Has an anchor been fired in us? When we find ourselves responding in a way that reminds us of events and feelings from the past. When we want to become more resourceful and when we anticipate being in a situation that may threaten us or put us under pressure.

⁹ For this section on some NLP techniques, the book by Ian Mcdermott and Wendy Jago, The NLP Coach, A comprehensive guide to Personal well-being & professional success has been largely referred to.

NLP suggests that we become curious about what anchors us into a resourceful and pleasurable state-our positive anchors. It encourages us to notice any negative anchors we have. Positive anchors should be re-enforced, negative anchors should be eliminated through change in the sub-modalities.

Critical Sub-modalities

The five senses are known in NLP as modalities, because each is a mode or way of processing information. Each of the senses (modalities) involves a number of sub-modalities. For instance, in the visual modality, the sub modalities include colour, brightness, focus, dimensionality, etc.

When we look at something out there, the impact it has on us will be affected by some of these sub-modalities often without our being aware of it. Similarly, when we process images internally, their impact will depend on the particular way we have constructed the image for ourselves.

Particular sub-modalities will be especially influential. These are known as critical sub-modalities. Knowing which ones are more influential for us gives us an important key to structuring our experience.

Association/Dissociation

In essence, associated means remembering something and seeing it through your own eyes. Dissociated means seeing it from somewhere else with yourself in the picture. For instance on TV or film screen. This is a basic sub-modalities division.

Association and Dissociation give us a completely different take even on the same experience. When we want to get more involved in something or help someone else do so, Association is useful. When we want or somebody else wants to gain some mental or emotional distance from something in order to manage it more calmly or think about it strategically, Dissociation can be used.

Reframing

Reframing is changing the meaning of an experience or an event by putting another frame around it.

Reframing causes us to see things differently: it is a new interpretation, with the result that we arrive at a different conclusion, evaluation or feeling.

When we are faced with something which we or someone else finds unpleasant, threatening or difficult. Could there be another way of looking at it?

When we need to get another perspective on anything. Could it be put in another setting and see how it looks then?

When something seems too good to be true. Would it be a good idea to test out whether it still seems as promising, if considered from a different angle? Through reframing, NLP trains us to explore different ways of thinking about the same phenomena or set of events. It trains us to notice the subtle differences between words and the way they frame things and lead to different effects. NLP helps us notice how other people frame things, and how the media frame them.

Chunking

Chunking is the process of grouping items of information into larger and smaller units.

Chunking helps us to organise our thinking and handle more information. Chunking also allows us to become more efficient at categorising information. It is an excellent NLP tool for better communication with self and others.

NLP helps us to know our chunking style: Do we like to chunk down and go for

details? Or do we like to chunk up and go for the big picture? NLP helps us to know other's chunking preferences and allows us to communicate and have rapport with others accordingly.

Chunking is a good tool to enhance our communication skill

Bala Vikasa is extensively drawing on the techniques of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in all its projects/programs for motivating and empowering people and is finding it to be an innovative approach to achieve sustainable community development. Its experiment with NLP in its training sessions with women leaders and poor widows within its women's group, having culminated in the women setting new goals with a keen desire to move forward in life, has highlighted the success of Bala Vikasa adapting NLP tools to achieve its community development objectives.

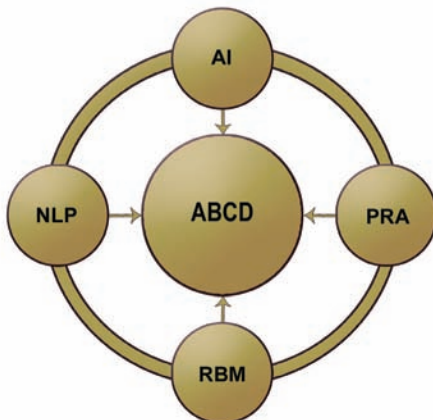
CHAPTER Two

Community Driven Development: Innovative Approach and Tools

The traditional approach to Community Development, based on needs and weaknesses of the community, has been proved to be unsustainable. Bala Vikasa's innovative Community Development approach at the grassroots, on the other hand, has resulted in sustainable development projects. Bala Vikasa development projects are driven by the people themselves, putting into practice its motto "Help the people to help themselves". It builds on the positive experiences of the individuals and the community focusing on peoples' assets not needs. These act as incentives.

Bala Vikasa's perspective of community development being: "For the people, by the people, of the people", elements of sustainable development become entrenched from the initial stage of the development process.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)



The ABCD approach to community development is 'asset based' and 'relationship driven'. It recognises and reinforces the prevailing assets within the community. It is founded on the principle that recognition of strengths, skills and abilities of individuals and communities is more likely to generate positive action for change. The ABCD process,

aims to assist, support, encourage, and enable communities to become inclusive and interdependent that it becomes a daily experience for everyone in the community, and not the goal or the experience of a select few.

“Asset Based Community Development” (ABCD) approach¹⁰ is supported by 4 sets of tools based on "positive thinking" which are used at the grassroots, to bring about change of attitude and empowerment. At the Community Level: 1) an organisational development methodology called “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI) and, 2) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools are used to enhance real participation of all the members of the community. 3) At the Individual Level, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) is used to bring out the best in the most passive members of the community and to enhance the best in the agents of change. 4) At the Management Level, Results Based Management (RBM) is followed, which focuses on the positive results to be expected and achieved in the development process.

As a strategy, ABCD pays attention to the relationship of the community to the local institutions and the external economic environment on which its continued prosperity depends.

As a methodology, ABCD is guided by the notion that communities that recognize their assets and opportunities are more likely to be motivated to take initiatives to mobilise and strengthen their asset base. Guided by this, the community agent of change has to decide which combination of tools and methods are most appropriate for helping communities organise themselves to identify and mobilise their assets.

In brief, ABCD demonstrates that focusing on the assets of a community is a key ‘building block’ to sustainable community development. It challenges the traditional approach to development where the exclusive focus is on needs and problems of individuals.

¹⁰ Bala Vikasa, Sharing Series 5, ABCD: The Bala Vikasa Way, (December 2006).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI is the study of what gives life to human systems when they are at their best. It is an organization development methodology based on the assumption that inquiry into, and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams, is in itself transformational. It is founded on the following set of beliefs regarding human nature and human organizing:



- Individually and collectively, people have unique abilities, skills and the aptitude to bring about changes in life.
- Organizations are human social systems, sources of unlimited relational capacity, created and lived through communication and language.
- Images we hold of the future are socially created, and once articulated, serve to guide individual and collective actions to achieve the same.
- Through human communication (inquiry and dialogue), people can shift their attention and action away from problem analysis to worthy ideals and productive possibilities for the future.

Appreciative Inquiry is a vital approach to leadership and organizational change. In short, Appreciative Inquiry suggests that human organization and change, at its best, is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

NLP motivates and empowers people to realise what they want in life. NLP techniques when used at the grassroots, help motivate the poor and look into future possibilities.

On a closer look it is evident that the fundamental beliefs based on which AI is built, and the presuppositions of NLP, have similarities, each strengthening the other. NLP believes in the unlimited potential of human beings and their capacity to: enlarge the mental map and visualise the future so as to lead one to the intended destination; explore alternatives with the realisation that there can never be only one solution to a problem; appreciate one's own strengths and build on them rather than worry about weaknesses.

The presuppositions of NLP and the principle of ABCD approach seem to blend with each other in many ways. ABCD approach rests on the principle that the recognition of strengths, talents, and assets of individuals and communities is more likely to inspire positive action for change than an exclusive focus on needs and problems. NLP believes in the limitless power of every individual. All brains are equally potent. If one can do something, anyone can do it. NLP believes that one must trust one's sub-conscious. All these presuppositions of NLP are based on the skills, talents and assets of individuals. When they combine they become powerful. The very recognition of these, permeates self-confidence, generates self-respect and improves self-image, essential components for setting and achieving goals in life.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

PRA is a set of tools which uses local graphic representations created by the community. Participation of local communities, helps bring to the fore legitimate local knowledge and valuable information. The validity of their knowledge generates new confidence. In turn, their local intellectual and analytical capabilities and the local culture are



respected. The extensive and creative use of local materials and representations, encourages visual sharing and avoids imposing external representational conventions. The emphasis is on the process. Its enhanced sensitivity focuses its attention more on marginal and vulnerable groups-women, children, aged, and the destitute.

Social Mapping is one of the main tools for the ABCD approach. It deals with an elaborate inventory of the assets of a community, often time with the help of participatory techniques promoted by participatory rural appraisal. While mapping, other PRA techniques are also used such as informal interviews, Venn diagrams, etc. These are primarily right brain activities. The left brain being associated with analytical thought, logic, language, maths and science, and the right brain's functions being holistic thought, intuition, creativity, art, music etc., people enjoy such activities and in the process develop their creativity and ability to imagine.

Results Based Management (RBM)

RBM is a way of managing, whereby, an organization ensures that all of its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of the desired results. It depends on clearly defined accountability for results, and requires systematic monitoring, self-assessment and reporting on the progress.

The objective of RBM is to provide a coherent framework of strategic planning and management, based on learning and accountability in a decentralised environment. Introduction of a results based approach aims to improve the management effectiveness and accountability by 'defining expected and realistic results, monitoring progress towards the achievement of expected results, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and reporting on performance.'

Bala Vikasa has effectively drawn from the above illustrated approach and tools, to motivate and empower people to realise what they want in life than being passive members of the community. It has also succeeded in greatly enhancing the best in the agents of change. This methodology has made Bala Vikasa Community Development process an innovative one, ensuring success and sustainability.

CHAPTER Three

NLP in Community Development

NLP as a Tool

Since its inception in the 1970s, NLP has been used for many reasons, some better than others. Star athletes use NLP to program their mindset "visualizing the small difference which will bring about victory"; business people utilize NLP techniques as motivational instrument giving them advantages over their customers. "Healers"



practice NLP with the valid assumption that mind influences body and can cure diseases. Sometimes they fail! NLP is also used for personal growth by so called "gurus" who offer different cocktails to achieve happiness to gullible disciples: a bit of NLP, a bit of mysticism from oriental spiritualities: Hinduism, Buddhism, a bit of primitive South American religions, etc. They only make a lot of money!

The concept of using NLP as a tool for Community Driven Development is rather new. One of the first NLP practitioners to use NLP for People Community Development has been Mr. M. R. Arulraja. His book published in 2005 is titled: "Achieving Rural Development Using Neuro Linguistic Programming-NLP Guide for Planners and People-Helper", was recognized by the Founder of Bala Vikasa as being a challenging and practical book... a 'vade mecum' for any community agent of change who wants to aim his/her action on sustainability and on the participatory awareness and change of mindset in local community.

Bala Vikasa Uses NLP as a tool for Motivation and Empowerment

Bala Vikasa believes that NLP stands on the solid ground of "Positive Psychology" and can be successfully used in bringing to the poor of this world, the hope, the motivation and the strength to empower themselves and work at their own development.



Bala Vikasa has used NLP techniques in its development programs, finding some elements of NLP particularly useful for achieving the objectives. NLP concepts of Modeling and Congruence, have been integrated and NLP has been used for motivational purpose.

1. Modeling

Modeling is the basis of NLP. It comes from asking the question: "How do outstanding people achieve excellence? It is the process of finding out specifically how people go about doing something. Whether accomplishing a task, performing a skill to meet a specific challenge, or living a fulfilled life.

The information needed for modeling is likely to be found in one or more of the following areas: setting and the environment; behaviour; skills and capabilities; belief and questions of identity. In NLP these categories are known as logical levels.

You can model others at any of these levels, and the more fully you model them, the closer and effective your modeling gets.

NLP reveals that modeling makes the transfer of knowledge possible. It is the foundation of learning. NLP suggests that if we know how someone does something well, we can learn to do it too-provided we have information that is detailed enough.

In its approach to community driven development, Bala Vikasa has experimented and found that modeling is a powerful tool for achievement.

The founder of Bala Vikasa "Balakka"¹¹ (Sister Bala) is the role model of the organization, especially for the 1,80,000 Bala Vikasa women. These village women see themselves in Balakka. They dream to be like her and



emulate her as they are aware that like them, their akka was born in a small village, the village of Reddipalem. Like them, this small made but tenacious women was a member of a deprived community. To these women, Balakka has become their catalytic force and strength, a beacon of light showing them the way to empowerment and self-determination. As an organization, all Bala Vikasa members consider the founder to be their role model and aim to be like her.

Another example of NLP modeling in use by Bala Vikasa, is the concept of "Model Community", "Model Village". Over the last two decades, Bala Vikasa has shouldered the development of Gangadevipalli¹². This village is now recognized at the local and national level as a "model village" and has won many awards.

Every week, representatives of other villages visit Gangadevipalli, and are warmly welcomed by the village community. The visitors, return to their respective villages, dreaming to model their village like Gangadevipalli. The visit fills them with a new determination. Bala Vikasa encourages this "modelling" between Gangadevipalli and other villages. Presently, there are more than 60 villages which are at varying degrees of development, inspired by the development of Gangadevipalli.

¹¹ With progression in age, women are now calling Bala Vikasa Founder: Balamma (Mother Bala) even Balaammama (Grand-mother Bala).

¹² Refer to Bala Vikasa SS5, for a full presentation of Gangadevipalli as a " model village ".

2. Congruence: Key factor for Agents of Change

NLP practitioner Ted Garratt writes¹³ "Congruence is about the alignment and consistency of the message and how it is put across and received".

Congruence, to start with, is to be in rapport with oneself. To be "in rapport" with oneself is a condition "sine qua non" to be in rapport with others. Before "talking the walk", agents of change have to "walk the talk". Their talks have to match their deeds.

If there is no congruence on the part of the agent of change, the people in the community will receive mixed signals and will intuitively detect the insincerity and empty promises of the agent of change.

For NLP, Congruence means that the body language, tonality and words should carry the same message; that beliefs and values line up actions. This is how an authentic and genuine NLP practitioner differentiates himself/herself from the many



"charlatans" superficially using NLP techniques to "manipulate" others. To be in harmony with oneself and with the other, defines NLP congruence.

Bala Vikasa's way of thinking is that NLP practitioners, should firstly work on themselves before thinking of engaging in rapport with people of a community.

3. Motivation for Empowerment and Self-Help

A major challenge for an agent of change is the question of how to motivate people to take their development into their own hands. When a person is totally down he or she won't be able to look at new avenues. He/she must start with what he/she has.

¹³ Ted Garratt, The effective Delivery of Training Using NLP, p. 62



The poor and the downtrodden in the first place, need to identify and understand their unfulfilled aspirations and the root causes for the same. NLP provides keys to start with what we have and move on. At times, we look for gold outside whereas our inner baskets are filled with diamonds. NLP helps us to knock at all inner

doors to find out the treasures available. In promoting community driven development, Bala Vikasa finds that NLP is a powerful instrument for motivation, as it encourages people of the community, young, old, men and women, to look within - at the treasures available within their own community.

NLP has discovered that there are two types of motivations which work in very different ways with very different directions and results. There is the "away from" motivation and the "toward" motivation. At the physical level, everyone has developed both "away from" and "toward" motivation: "away" from pain, discomfort, stress and "toward" pleasure, comfort and relaxation. Everyone uses both directions to some degree but everyone tends to specialize in one direction of motivation or the other. An agent of change has to find which direction of motivation the community tends to follow and act accordingly.

When comparing the "toward" and "away from" motivation, the "toward" motivation is considerably more appealing. Since the benefits of "toward" motivation are more obvious, an agent of change should favor this direction while addressing the motivation of people. This is the finding of Bala Vikasa while using an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

Bala Vikasa has successfully integrated NLP in its programmes using the NLP concepts of modeling, motivation and congruence in its development process and also on itself, to become effective and efficient Agent of Change.

CHAPTER Four

NLP: The Bala Vikasa Way Changing Mindsets of Rural Women

NLP is an Empowering Tool: changes mindsets

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft once said: “If you are born poor, it is not your mistake. But if you die poor it's your mistake”. He was laying emphasis on the need to work hard and the need to have a success oriented mindset. In short he meant that hard work pays. Everyone has skills and the potential to achieve success. Some achieve success through fruitful attempts. Some give it a try. Some give up. NLP shows us ways to achieve success.



Generally, we do not use the full potential of our brain. In fact we can get most of our work done in a professional way, if we know how to handle our brain. NLP shows us the way to use our brain to its full potential. We can change our existing thoughts, actions and feelings the way we want, as it is we who feed the information into our brain. Since we are the ones to feed the brain, we can also be the ones to alter.

NLP provides keys to push out useless memories and to strengthen useful memories. Negative feelings about people, activity, things, past, etc., can hinder our growth to a large extent. When we allow past memories to influence us, we are not able to look at new experience in a new perspective, new light, new angle and new positions. We tend to judge people based on past experiences, with limited information and data. For this, we pay a heavy price later.

People, knowingly or unknowingly, fall into the trap of some habits and at one point of time find it an hindrance to their growth. We can think of examples such

as, procrastination, not being serious about work, not being punctual, smoking etc., NLP provides ways to win over them. Knowledge alone cannot guarantee our progress. Knowledge needs to be converted into attitude and attitude results in change in behaviour.

When asked about the future, poor rural women often say, 'We are born to suffer and our fate has already been written on our forehead'. With this mindset, it is difficult to progress. Positive attitude and approach is necessary for success. Application of NLP techniques help bring about changes-negative attitudes to positive thinking.

Bala Vikasa's experiment with NLP

NLP has been an effective tool to motivate and empower Bala Vikasa women. It has helped Bala Vikasa change the attitudes and mindset of rural women. It has not only helped to modify their way of thinking and perception of the world, but it has also helped increase the intensity of positive experiences and decrease the power of negative experiences that hitherto had hindered their growth processes.

Integrating NLP approach in its Community Development process, Bala Vikasa helped the poor to have a dream for their future, a future of progress and prosperity. NLP approach helped the women to



dream like winners who have dreamt about their future. NLP helped the women to exercise all the five senses, to experience the goal and use the resources in the subconscious mind to realize the set goal. Integrating NLP in its development approach, Bala Vikasa not only helped the women dream intensely, but also encouraged them to make their dream come true. In the distressing state the women were in, a session using NLP as a tool, provided them with renewed energy, hope, will power and confidence. NLP provided the keys to pull back all the lost resources.

NLP also fosters positive thinking. Positive thinking can result in positive outcome. NLP believes in success and not in failures. If something goes wrong, it is only a feedback for us to set things.

Training Session for Women Leaders

Fully appreciating the NLP approach, Bala Vikasa used NLP in strengthening the capacity of women leaders to dream about development so that the dreams can steer them to achieve the same and help build self-confidence.

Bala Vikasa organised a training session for women leaders. During the training they were asked to express their vision for their family and their community after five years. They were requested to think of positive content, develop belief in self-help and inner power.

The women leaders were provided with posters, crayons, pictures, sketch pens and requested to present their dreams using drawings, cartoons, etc. Their final presentation was amazing. They were able to travel through a five year journey, feel the requirements inspired by the subconscious and visualize their future and that of the community.



Eight posters were prepared by the participants. The group members made their presentations to the large group.

The Outcome

In sharing their impressions about the day's programme, women were unanimous in stating that they are now able to have a mental picture of a developed village and community, and a clear vision of what they want in the future. They stated that the dreams portrayed in the posters are now well implanted in their minds and the recollection of their dreams would surely motivate them to move forward with renewed spirit and wisdom. Their

statements stood testimony to the NLP concept that when people dream and experience the same through all their senses, it becomes an integral part of their system which will eventually drive them to fulfill their dreams.



The outcome of the session demonstrated that the objective of the session which was to create awareness, motivate and empower the women, was fully realized.

Presented below are the dreams of some of the women for development

Sumathi (47) from Dammampet village, wants to live in peace and harmony. She wants justice for her work. Wishes to be honest in her life. She looks forward to a neat and clean village in five years time. She does not want to see a single liquor shop in her village. She expects every member in the village to participate in development programmes.

Sandra Aruna (29) from Venkatapuram village, wants to own a house. She wants to purchase two sovereigns of gold and two acres of land and give quality education to her children. She wants to stop the liquor production in the village and keep the village clean.

Reddimalle Aruna of Dhammanapet village wants to have Rs. 50,000/- in fixed deposit in her son's name and buy one acre of land for her son. She wants to shift her son from government school to a private school. She wants to stop liquor production in the village, introduce drainage system and stop child labour once for all.

Pulluri Kalavathi of Vaddagudu village wants to keep her son in a good hostel and give quality education. She wants to keep Rs.50,000/- in a fixed deposit in her son's name and buy two acres of land. She wants to eliminate liquor shops in the village, make women's group stronger, ration shops to run properly, stop child labour and introduce drinking water facility in her village.

Iruku Rama of Katrayala village: "I want to replace my small auto-rickshaw with big size one and construct a house. I will try and find good jobs for my children. I will change the attitude of my husband and father-in-law towards me. I want concrete roads in my village and want all to close down all liquor shops. I want the "anganwadi (day care center) to function well."

Manda Swaroopa of Illanda village: "I want to get good jobs for my children. I want to help my husband to give up drinking and save at least Rs.10,000/- per year. I want concrete roads in my village, drainage system, and street lights. I want our gram panchayat to function effectively and women to develop leadership qualities by attending training programmes."

Saritha (23) of Venkatapuram village: "I want to build a new house and be happy with my children. I want to give good education to my children and would like to see them in high status. I want to keep my family in good health and improve our agricultural land. I want my village to have concrete roads, bore wells for every colony, transport buses, good drainage system and have cleanliness in the village."

Sunitha (28) of Venkatapura village: "I want to provide good education to my children and improve my business. I want to buy two more acres of agricultural land and buy gold. I want concrete roads in our village, drainage system, water facility to every family, more bore wells and an English medium school."

Laxmi (39) of Waradhanpet village: "I want to give good education to my son. I want to see him in a nice position in the society. I want to see my village look like a city with all development and eliminate child labour. I want every one to be happy and there should be no rich-poor disparity."

Indiramma (49) of Mylaram village: "I want to see all my family members happy, have good clothes to wear, and good food to eat. I want to earn more and buy gold. I want to remove alcohol shops in my village. I want drainage system, water plant installation, water facility, bore wells and concrete road."

The women leaders expressed that they were able to see their visions of concrete roads, buses plying, drainage system at work, children going to school, ration shop functioning properly, schools maintaining high standards, etc., during the exercise. They were able to think about the development of their family and community deeply. They expressed their confidence at being able to accomplish all that they have dreamt and share their dream with the rest of the community members. Visualizing a better and promising future, they were keen to fulfill their dream. They felt that their strong desire to realize their dream would motivate them to action.

Bala Vikasa's experiment with the women leaders has proved that NLP as a tool, can contribute immensely to development initiatives. It can provide the well needed psychological empowerment to move forward with confidence to achieve success in personal and community life.

Session for Poor Widows

Bala Vikasa conducted another session for poor widows at the grassroots, using NLP techniques. 14,000 widows are enrolled as members of Bala Vikasa womens' group. Majority of them are daily wage earners. They live in and around Warangal, one of the districts in India which has a large number of young widows. A study has revealed that the primary cause for the death of the husbands has been unemployment, alcoholism and debt. It has also divulged the numerous predicaments of the widows. On losing their husbands, the young widows are humiliated and abused by their in-laws and even by their own family members. Widows are considered outcasts and a burden to the family. They have to shoulder a three-pronged burden.

Firstly, for being a women, they are forced to be subservient to men. Secondly, they have no decision making powers at home. Thirdly, they are left alone to fend for themselves once their



husbands die and thus they are forced to face severe economic problems. Added to all this, caste discrimination puts them under stress and they are compelled to forgo various privileges and pleasures. Widows, especially the poor ones, have to break all the shackles that bind them, if they wish to achieve any success in life. As a result, unable to face the conflicts within the family and deal with the humiliation meted out to them by the society, many widows commit suicide. Death, they consider, as the only option to end their miserable existence.

The rising number of deaths among widows prompted Bala Vikasa to launch a series of programmes for their betterment: organizing them into groups to support each other, providing education for their children, improving their economic condition by providing loans for income generation projects, providing frequent counseling, training them in life skills etc.

Psychological Empowerment

Of the five most important empowerment processes, psychological, educational, economic, socio-cultural and political, the psychological empowerment is crucial for the rural women, especially the widows. They need help to gain self-confidence and hope



after going through humiliation, economic crisis, social discrimination, losing human dignity and respect on becoming widows. Fully understanding the need to psychologically empower the widows, the objective of Bala Vikasa empowerment sessions was to enable them to search for alternatives to resolve some of their problems, to help them gain self-confidence and to encourage them to dream about their future, so that dreams can act as one of the driving forces towards achieving a better and successful life.

In its training sessions, Bala Vikasa has successfully used NLP as a tool to motivate poor widows. It has effectively applied the NLP techniques to heal the

wounds of widows, bring change to their agonizing life-situations, and help them discover their inner potential. The outcome is that by infusing in them psychological strength to face life with confidence and hope, the poor widows have not only been able to rid themselves of the wounds and scars inflicted upon them by the society, but have been able to push back past memories which hindered their growth and look forward to a brighter future. Through motivation and empowerment, Bala Vikasa has succeeded in helping them think positively towards a new life ahead. This has helped the widows use their subconscious to find solutions for their problems, for which they were hitherto struggling to find a way out.

NLP has helped the widows to not only identify their inner strength but also apply it for their newly identified tasks. NLP techniques have provided the courage for the young widows to dream of their future. Bala Vikasa has encouraged them to make strong mental pictures about their future course of action through dreams. Their dreams have been helping them, acting as a driving force to realize a better future.

Techniques Used in Bala Vikasa sessions

During one of the NLP sessions in a village located around 16 kilometers from Warangal, it was found that around 23 young widows had attempted to end their lives due to economic hardships, social discrimination and humiliation at their in-laws' house. During the introductory session, ninety percent of the women were seen crying.



Bala Vikasa follows a specific method of collecting data from poor widows. All widows are asked to close their eyes and raise their hands for the questions put by the animator if the answer is 'yes'. This method has worked well as having similar problems, the widows do not feel shy to respond.

To questions such as 'how many have bank accounts, how many have more than Rs.40,000, how many have more than two sarees, how many have land, how many have debt to clear, how many have studied up to standard X, some women were seen weeping as the questions triggered memories of the inhuman treatment they had received, their poverty, helplessness, etc. Their emotion was a clear indication that they were still harboring within them a lot of negative feelings and suffering intensely. The horrifying events had been so deeply etched in their minds that subconsciously they anchored such events associating with other visuals, audio or feelings. With such anchors being triggered knowingly or unknowingly, they burst into tears. Having released their pent up feelings they felt slightly relaxed. But it was evident that they had all negative thoughts tucked away in their mind.

During the empowerment session, Bala Vikasa effectively used some NLP techniques on the entire group such as: The Circle of excellence, distancing oneself from unwanted memories by disassociation, Swish pattern exercises, and Flower therapy. (Refer to annexure for details).

The Outcome¹⁴

Before the empowerment session, widows were found to be highly emotional having kept their distressing past bottled up within them for years.. Most of them were in tears when asked personal details. They were not able to articulate well as they



were unable to control their emotions. To them, their future looked dark and bleak. However, Bala Vikasa's session helped them to turn their attention from a dismal present to their glorious past which had been put away in cold storage for long. In giving their achievements and successes, both big and small, recognition and respect, and magnifying their past, Bala Vikasa helped the widows

¹⁴ NB: Prior to the empowerment session, the organizers got the consent of the participants to share the information with others for learning purpose. The participants gladly agreed.

reset their focus. It helped as a reference point for them to move forward. The glorious past functioned as their light house to show new pathways for their future.

But at the end of the day, it was evident that the empowerment session had produced exceptional results. Widows were openly conceding that some miracle had occurred and they were feeling very light. One member said, 'I am not able to recall the sad memory anymore. When I try to recall it, I see only flowers that I like very much', the other said, 'I am not able to remember the sad event now. It has moved far away from me'. One young widow expressed, 'I feel completely confident now. I can sense the new energy in my body'. One elderly woman said, 'I have been longing for solutions to my problem, and I have found them today, not one but three!'. The outcome was that they were all alluding to the NLP techniques that helped bring about definitive changes in them.

The potency of NLP's influence was succinctly stated by one widow after the empowerment session. "I will never hereafter attempt to end my life for the simple reason, I want to win. I don't want death to win me". A very powerful thought. She had discovered her inner potential. This filled her with a new found self-confidence and a determination to approach life with new vigour and energy. Old strengths were retrieved.

Testimonies to the effectiveness of NLP techniques.





1. Story of Manemma

“My husband died when I was 21 years old. Now I have a 12 year old daughter. My husband was a drunkard and he died due to excessive drinking. My in-laws never liked me staying in their house. I was literally thrown out of their house. Even now, I cannot enter their house. They abused me with bad words. Their actions and words forced me think of committing suicide. They never gave me an inch of their property although I was suffering from severe financial problem. I am not able to educate my daughter. Now my sister takes care of my daughter and provides for her education. There is not a single day I do not cry over my problems”.

**Sunakanapalli Manemma (30 Years),
Nellikuduru Village, Thorrur.**

Manemma wept throughout her sharing. Lack of confidence and feeling of loneliness had a strong grip over her.

After the NLP empowerment session

‘I feel very happy now. I feel that my problems have gone far from me and the solutions are at my doorstep.

Now I feel the power in my circle’ said Manemma, referring to NLP's ‘Circle of Excellence’ technique used. At the end of the session she was brimming with confidence.



2. Story of Padma

“I lost my husband when I was 23 years old. I have two sons and a daughter. My husband was a lawyer but a drunkard. He used to beat me almost every day. My younger son died due to ill health. On the same day my husband committed suicide. My elder son was mentally affected and now creates problems in the family. He neither listens to anyone nor studies properly. He roams the streets aimlessly and does not attend school. He fights with me when I advice him to behave properly. He shouts at me saying, 'Why did you give birth to me? I will die if you do not give me what I want, or else, you die'. My mother-in-law always abuses me saying I am unlucky and a bad omen. I never enjoyed a day eversince my marriage took place!”.

**Vadlakonda Padma (32 Years),
Velikatte Village, Thorrur.**

Throughout her sharing, Padma showed no interest in life. Her face revealed her inner pain although she tried to give an artificial smile.

After the NLP empowerment session

‘Now I see my son as a blooming flower in front of me. (referring to NLP's Flower Therapy used). I now feel confident to handle my son and change him into a responsible citizen.’
said Padma with a genuine smile on face.



3. Story of Yasoda

“I have a son. My husband died five years back when I was just 20. I was chased away from my father-in-law's house. Now they are asking me to hand over my son to them.

One thing that drives me mad is that I am not allowed to take part in any function in our village, just because I am a widow. I feel frustrated with my life when I see my friends living happily with their families.

Often my son cries asking for his father, but from where can I bring him? “.

**Midathapalli Yashoda (25 Years),
Beerusettigudem Village, Dantthalapalli.**

Yashoda could not share her feelings comfortably as she was weeping all the time.

After the NLP empowering session

‘I feel happy now. I strongly feel that the powerful circle is following me all the time like my shadow and I don't need to worry anymore’ said Yashoda confidently. (She referred to the ‘Circle of Excellence technique’ used).



4. Story of Vijaya

“I have two daughters. My husband was a good man. He took care of me well when he was alive. He fell ill and died two years back. I miss him very much now. My younger daughter often asks me about her father as she was very much attached to him. Ever since my husband died, my co-sister stopped inviting me for any function. They speak ill of me saying I was the reason for my husband's death. At times I feel like committing suicide. Why should I suffer unnecessarily? What sin have I committed to face this wrath? Why should God test me so badly like this?”.

**Dadigala Vijaya (22 Years),
Velikatte Village, Thorrur.**

Vijaya looked frustrated and discouraged throughout her sharing.

After the NLP empowering session

‘Now I feel extremely happy. Earlier, I feared a lot. Now I feel courageous and confident. Now I understand that no problem is permanent and there is always a solution to each problem. I want to lead a happy life from now on’.



5. Story of Manjula

“I married my own uncle and got two kids. While we were leading a happy life, my uncle died in an accident 10 months back. Since his death was sudden and unexpected, my children have not been able to reconcile to their father's death. Whenever I look at my children, I think of my husband's love and feel very sad”.

**Rathnapuram Manjula (22 Years),
Nellikuduru, Thorrur.**

Manjula was shivering during her sharing. She looked frightened and discouraged.

After the NLP empowering session

'I used to get scared every time the picture of my husband taken during the accident came to my mind. Now I have filled the circle of excellence with all the good memories of my husband. I feel energetic now. Recollection of my good life with my husband makes me happy', said Manjula with joy on her face.



6. Story of Uppamma

“My husband died twelve years ago leaving a son behind. I lost my daughter due to severe polio attack and I had no money to take care of her. When my husband was alive, I attended most of the functions in the village. We enjoyed respect from all families in the village. But everything vanished when my husband died. The only consolation is that my son is invited for all the functions. I feel sad about my misfortune. Financial problems torture me”.

**Pareedula Uppamma (30 Years),
Danthalapalli Village, Danthalapalli.**

Uppamma seemed to have lost her inner peace and looked restless and discouraged.

After the NLP empowering session

‘When I think of the past, only jasmine flower appears in my mind with all its fragrance and freshness. I feel energized.

Thanks to the Flower Therapy Bala Vikasa taught me’.



7. Story of Dasari Padma

“I have two daughters. My husband died 14 years back. He was an alcoholic and used to beat me almost every day. I managed to get one of my daughter’s married to a local boy but I am struggling to get the other daughter married due to severe financial problem. I have no one to blame but my parents for having tied me up with a foolish fellow who never treated life seriously”.

**Dasari Padma (35 Years),
Nellikuduru, Thorrur.**

Feeling of hatred and anger dominated Padma throughout her sharing.

After the NLP empowering session

‘When I came to this place in the morning, I had my own reservations. But now, I feel the value of the empowerment session. I feel very much energized. I feel I am a free person now. My heart is filled with happiness’.



8. Story of Sarojini

“My mind was never at peace when my husband was alive. He was a drunkard and was often found lying on the streets. Looking at my plight, my parents consoled me. They also complained that I disturb them with my problems. My own daughter tells me to die or kill her so that I can be at peace. I am neither able to satisfy my children's needs nor the wishes of my parents. Why should I lead such a shameful life?”.

**T. Sarojini (32 Years),
Thorur Village, Thorur.**

Sarojini looked discouraged and insecure during her sharing with no interest in life.

After the NLP empowering session

‘Now I feel very much relieved. I see some hope in me and I feel confident. Some bright ideas have now come to my mind to earn money to take care of my daughter’ said Sarojini with a confident voice.



9. Story of Sambalaxmi

“My husband never allowed me to go out for work. He took good care of me. But when he died, economic problem forced me to move out of my house. I worked as a coolie. Ever since my husband's death, conflict over property has disturbed me very much. I am pushed from pillar to post”.

**Sambalaxmi (32 Years),
Danthalapalli Village, Danthalapalli.**

Sambalaxmi lacked inner peace and showed signs of insecurity during the sharing.

After the NLP empowering session

‘When I came here in the morning, I was suffering from severe head ache. After the therapy, I feel fully relieved. It is a miracle for me. My feverish feeling has disappeared. I am relieved of all my pain. I feel comfortable and happy now’.



10. Story of Yaskeswari

“My condition is very critical now. I have to feed my old parents and my children. When I go out wearing a good sari, people talk ill of me. When they say I am going against social norms, I feel sad and tense”.

**B. Yaskeswari (29 Years),
Danthalapalli Village, Danthalapalli.**

Yaskeswari looked insecure and fearful during the sharing.

After the NLP empowering session

‘When I entered the training hall this morning, my heart was filled with sadness. Now I am filled with energy and feel that I can lead my life with courage. I am confident that I can educate my children’ said Yaskeswari with confidence.



11. Story of Venkatammai

“My mother-in-law has no love for me. My husband was a drunkard and that killed him eventually. My children do not listen to me anymore. I suffer from acute financial crisis. I lose my peace of mind when I think of my children's marriage. I tried to be happy but could not succeed. My in-laws accuse me as being irresponsible. They expect me to mourn all my life since I am a widow”.

**M. Venkatamma (35 Years),
Beerusettigudem Village, Danthalapalli.**

Venkatamma looked highly insecure and discouraged during her sharing.

After the NLP empowering session

‘I poured red colour into my Circle of Excellence. I filled it with jasmine flowers. As the circle began to rotate, I played my favourite song. I felt strengthened when I stepped into the circle and I am sure I can get it any time I want it. Before coming to this session, I wondered why should I come here leaving all my work. But now I feel very happy and confident’
said Venkatamma with joy on her face.



12. Story of Swaroopa

“I chose coolie work after my husband's death to feed my children. Whenever I talked to male members in the village, I was abused by the elders. At one stage, I got fed up and decided to commit suicide. I do not know how I am going to arrange marriage for my daughters. When children ask me about their father, I am left with no answer but tears. When my child stood first in the class, she came running home and told me that had her father been alive, he would have appreciated it a lot. All these thoughts come across my mind and rob me of my peace”.

**K. Swaroopa (29 Years),
Nellikuduru Village, Thorrur.**

Swaroopa wept throughout her sharing. She seemed to have a suicidal tendency. She felt rejected by the society.

After the NLP empowering session

‘I filled my Circle of Excellence with fresh jasmine flowers. I played a devotional song inside the circle. Now I feel strong and confident to lead my life with hope and trust’ said Swaroopa with a gentle smile on her face.



13. The Story of Kalama

“I feel lonely as there is no one to listen to my problems. I do not know how long I should suffer this loneliness. I do not know why God made my life so miserable!”.

**N. Kalama (25 Years),
Nellikuduru, Thorur.**

Kalama looked dejected and insecure.

After the NLP empowering session

‘When I was doing the exercise, I remembered all the sad events in my life and cried. But after the empowerment session, I realized that I had undergone an empowerment process unknowingly. Now I feel strong and happy’ said Kalama happily.



14. The Story of Ilamma

“All the family responsibilities have fallen on me after my husband's death. I do not know what to do and how to resolve these problems. I do not know how I will bring up my children!”.

**K. Ilamma, (40 Years),
Velikatte Village, Thorrur.**

Ilamma looked discouraged and lonely.

After the NLP empowering session

‘Now I feel very happy. Bala Vikasa has equipped me with skills to overcome my problem. I benefitted very much from this session’, said Ilama with joy and happiness.

Conclusion: NLP Can Liberate and Empower

During the introductory session, the predominant feeling among the widows was one of dire helplessness in their present state. Like many of the poor, the widows too believed that it was their kismet (fate) as their deeds in their previous birth must be the cause for their present miserable state of life. This mindset, added to their pain, stress and strain, prevented them from looking beyond their present. In unquestioningly accepting their present, they had no set goals or dreams for their future. They merely existed from day to day. Future was never in their thoughts. This was the mood when they came for the session.

In using the NLP techniques, Bala Vikasa was able to wean the widows out of their pitiable state of helplessness and misery. Adapting the NLP approach, Bala Vikasa was able to improve the self-image of the widows and infuse in them a large degree of self confidence. NLP not only helped release negative emotions, but also enabled the widows to look at life in a more positive manner. Bala Vikasa's session, effectively using NLP tools helped empower the widows who testified that they felt a new sense of liberation, peace, and a keen desire to improve themselves and move on in life. Their testimonies bear witness to Bala Vikasa's effective use of NLP.

Bala Vikasa's experiment has proved that NLP is an effective motivational and empowering tool and NLP plays a crucial role in bringing about change, fundamental to development. Presently, Bala Vikasa is integrating this new innovative approach in all its development programs/projects.



ANNEXURE

Some NLP Techniques used by Bala Vikasa

NLP has many techniques that can be used to suit different situations. Bala Vikasa NLP practitioner drew on the following NLP techniques as they were the best suited techniques to achieve the objectives of its training sessions, that of motivating and empowering women leaders and poor widows:

1. The circle of Excellence
2. Distancing oneself from the unwanted Memories
3. Swish Pattern
4. Flower Technique

These exercises¹⁵ are briefly described below

1. Circle of Excellence

Questions to be asked to the participants:

What would you have accomplished in your life if you had more confidence in yourself? Which positive feelings from your past would you want to re-experience if you could transfer them from where they happened in your life to where you really want them now?

Steps to follow during the exercise:

1. **Relive Confidence.** Stand up and let yourself go back in your memory to a time when you were very confident, abundantly confident. Relive that moment, seeing what you saw and hearing what you heard.
2. **Circle of Excellence.** . As you feel the confidence building in you, imagine a coloured circle on the floor around your feet. What colour would you like your circle to be? Would you like it also to have a sound like a soft hum that indicates how powerful it is? When that feeling of confidence is at its fullest, visualize that you step out of that circle, leaving those

¹⁵ These exercises are found in NLP: The New Technology of Achievement, The NLP Comprehensive training team, edited by Steve Andreas and Charles Faulkner.

confident feelings inside the circle. This is an unusual request but you can do it.

3. **Selecting Cues.** Now think of a specific time in your future when you want to have that same feeling of confidence. See and hear what will be there just before you want to feel confident. This image is called the cue. The cue could be the moment that you have to speak to your mother-in-law or hearing yourself being called by your husband.
4. **Linking.** As soon as those cues are clear in your mind, step back into the circle and feel those confident feelings again. Imagine that situation unfolding around you in the future with these confident feeling fully available to you.
5. **Check Results.** Now step out of the circle again, leaving those confident feelings there in the circle. Outside the circle, take a moment and think again of that upcoming event. You'll find those confident feelings. This means you've already pre-programmed yourself for that upcoming event. You're feeling better about it and it has not even happened yet. When it arrives, you'll find yourself naturally responding more confidently.

2. Distancing oneself from the unwanted memories

1. Ask the participants to think of an unpleasant memory. Let the participants see it in form of a movie from beginning to the end, seeing the people whom they saw, hearing what they heard and feeling what they felt.
2. Now, ask the participants to rewind the movie quickly.
3. Then ask the participants to see the movie once again. When the participants begin to see the movie, ask them to dissociate from the movie and see them in the film experiencing what they experienced earlier.

4. Now ask the participants to push the memory away. Ask to push harder and harder. Ask them to push it strongly. Ask them to push harder so that it moves far away from them, diminishing in size, becoming a dot and finally bursting out in the sky.
5. Break the state the participants are in.
6. Test to see if the participants are able to recall the unpleasant memory. If it is successful, it will be hard to recall the sad memory.
7. Repeat the exercise three times.

3. Swish Pattern

The participant should take whatever time it takes to complete each step of this exercise thoroughly, comfortably, easily, and at his/her own pace.

1. **Identify the Cue Image.** Think of a time in your life when you were being particularly hard on yourself, when you lacked self-esteem. Actually allow yourself to be in that experience seeing what you are seeing, feeling what you are feeling, hearing what you are hearing. Let this unpleasant feeling become even more intense. Notice the part of your body in which you feel those feelings most strongly. Now that you are aware of these feelings, notice what you are seeing in your "mind's eye". Notice what you see internally. This is the cue image.
2. **Distraction.** To help you set the above experience aside, say your telephone number out loud. Try saying your phone number out loud again but backward this time.
3. **Create a Resourceful Self-Image.** Now take a minute or two to create in front of you an image of yourself, the way you would look if you had already solved the issue that affects your self-esteem. This is a future "you", a "you" who has already learned how to solve the issue that has troubled you. This "wonderful you" knows you will succeed because he/

she already has. See this "wonderful you" right in front of you, a large, bright, and colourful image of yourself having many resources to handle the issue that has blocked you. Take all the time needed to make your "wonderful you" becoming more real, more believable, more of whom you want to be. Play with this new "you". Make it larger, brighter, more colourful and moving. Your "wonderful you" is now telling you: "I feel good about myself!".

4. ***Practice Expanding the Resourceful Self-Image.*** Now, take the image of the "wonderful you" and put it into a tiny dot to rapidly blossom and get larger and larger - until it becomes life-size again and you can see the "wonderful you"... right in front of you... large and bright and colourful. Repeat this process several time, until it is automatic.
5. ***Place the Resourceful Self-Image. Dot into the Cue Image.*** Now place that tiny sparkling dot in the centre of the cue image that you discovered in Step one.
6. ***Exchange Image (Swish Them).*** Now, as the unpleasant image fades and gets smaller and disintegrates, the sparkling dot containing the "wonderful you" swiftly gets bigger and brighter until... swish... the "wonderful you" image overwhelms the unpleasant image, filling your mind's eye, so that all you can see is the "wonderful you". Let the good feelings wash over you.
7. ***See a blank Screen.*** Now see a blank screen in your mind, as though you were looking at a blank screen in a movie theatre before the movie begins.
8. ***Repeat Ten times.*** Do Steps 4-6 a little bit more quickly. Place that tiny sparkling dot in the centre of the unpleasant image, again. As the unpleasant image quickly fades and gets smaller and disintegrates, watch as your self-image rapidly gets bigger and brighter until... swish... the "wonderful you" image overwhelms the unpleasant image.

9. **Testing your work.** Take a moment now and notice what you feel when you try to get that original, unpleasant cue image back in mind. If you are unable to get the unpleasant feelings at all, or you have a tough time even seeing the unpleasant image, you have succeeded.

3. Flower Technique

1. Make the participants think of a favourite flower.
2. Make the participants, individually, to recall an event that makes them sad when they think of it. Let them see it in the form of a movie. Let them see what they saw, hear what they heard and feel what they felt. Let them see the persons and the places associated with the event.
3. Ask the participants to rewind their movies quickly.
4. Ask the participants to see their films once again. As they begin to see the films, within seconds ask them to see the chosen flower. As they look at it, ask them to make it bigger and bigger. Let them go close to the flower. Let them touch the flower. Let them smell the fragrance of the flower. Let them admire the beauty of the flower. Let the flower fill the movie screen.
5. Break the state of mind the participants are in.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 five times.

Test and see if the participants are able to recall the sad memories. If it is successful, it will be hard to recall the sad memory. Instead, they would see only the flower.

Anchor: A specific stimulus; sight, sound, word or touch that automatically brings up a particular memory and state of body and mind.

Associated (first position): seeing the world out of your own eyes. Experiencing life in your body. Contrast with Dissociated and third position.

Behavioural Flexibility: The ability to vary one's actions in order to elicit a desired response in another person.

Chunk Size: the amount of information or level of specificity considered at one time. People who are detail-oriented are "small chunkers". People who think in general terms are "large chunkers" - they see the big picture.

Congruence: When goals, thoughts and behaviors are all in agreement.

Critical Sub modalities: the sub modalities that, when they are changed, the rest of the sub modalities will change automatically.

Dissociated: Viewing/experiencing an event from outside of one's body. Ex. Seeing yourself on a movie screen. Contrast with Dissociated and third position.

Kinesthetic: The Sensory modalities of touch, muscle tension(sensations), and emotions (feelings).

Meta-Model: A set of linguistic distinctions and questions for determining from a person's language their Model of the World.

¹⁶ The definitions of terms are mostly taken from NLP The New Technology of Achievement, edited by Steve Andreas and Charles Faulkner, Harper, 1994.

Mirroring: Putting oneself in the same posture as another person in order to gain rapport. It is a naturally occurring communication process.

Modeling: The NLP process of studying living examples of human excellence in order to find the essential distinctions one needs to make in order to obtain the same results.

Motivation Direction: A mental program that determines whether a person moves toward or away from experiences.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP): The process of creating models of human excellence in which the usefulness not the truthfulness is the most important criterion for success. The study of the structure of subjective experience.

Rapport: The natural process of matching and being in alignment with another person.

Reframing: To change the frame or meaning of an event.

Representational Systems: the Sensory Modalities: Visual (V), Auditory (A), Kinaesthetic (K), Olfactory (O) and Gustatory (G). Called representational because it is the way memories and ideas are represented by human brains.

Sub modalities: The components that make up a sensory modality. Example: In the visual modality the Sub modalities will include colour, brightness, focus, dimensionality etc.

Swish Pattern: A generative sub modalities technique in which the cue for the difficulty becomes the trigger to overcome the difficulty. Useful for changing habits and emotional responses.

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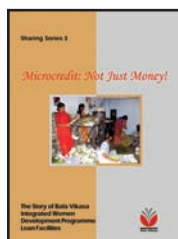
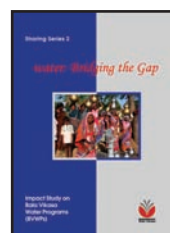
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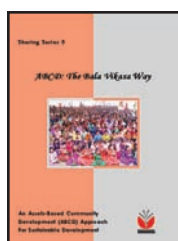
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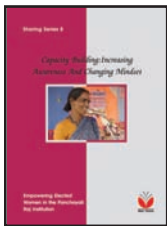
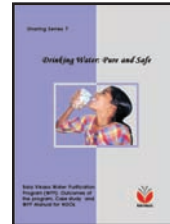
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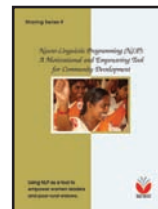


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Map of Andhra Pradesh - India

Bala Vikasa Programmes



sketch map not to scale

This booklet is published by Bala Vikasa People Development Training Center.

Bala Vikasa is a registered, secular, non-partisan, non-profit, voluntary social service organization in India, working mainly in Andhra Pradesh for a common goal: to help the people to help themselves without distinction of caste and creed.

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Reg. No. 569 of 1991 FCRA No 010360036

ISBN 81-902248-9-1